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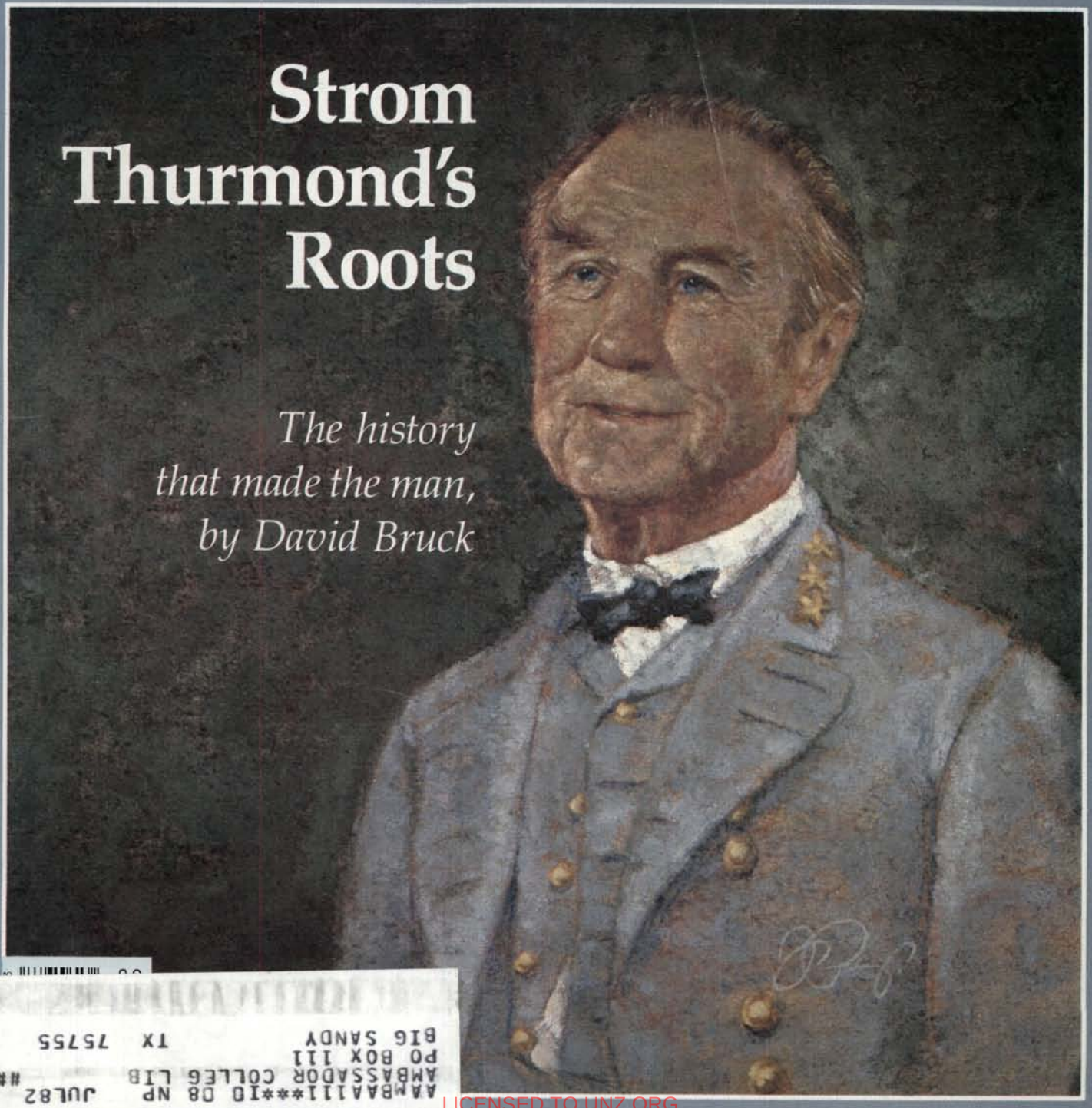
The El Salvador Maze, by Stanley Hoffmann

Reagan's Awful Budget • *Maureen Howard on Clare Boothe Luce*

THE NEW REPUBLIC



Strom Thurmond's Roots

The history that made the man, by David Bruck

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Is America getting beaten at its own game?

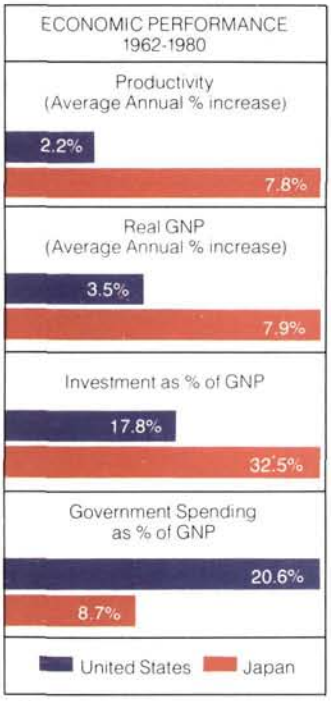
Productivity Gains. In any business, that's the name of the game. And right now, American business is losing its lead.

Since 1962, Japan, for one, has increased its productivity 3½ times faster than we have.

What we tend to forget though is that, in terms of productivity, we taught them the game. So much of what they started with in technology and management skills was once stamped "Made in America."

The point is they've learned a lot more from us than how to hit home runs and how to execute the double play.

This chart compares the U.S. economy with Japan's over the 1962-1980 period.



During those years, Japan's GNP growth rate in constant dollars was 2.3 times ours, because its investment rate was 1.8 times ours; its productivity grew 3.5 times ours—while government spending as a percent of GNP in Japan was less than half ours.

We've seen that when government spending goes out of control, so do taxes and inflation. And that results in the private sector losing control of its economic future.

Here are some additional figures for our economic scoreboard: Each year, 115 million Japanese invest more in new plants and equipment than 220 million Americans. So on the average, machinery in Japan is now 6 to 7 years newer than here. That's why a certain Japanese automaker can produce 9 engines per employee-day while one large American car company turns out just 2.

And so today, Japan leads the world in automobile production; it has surpassed us in steel production and dominates world markets in cameras, hand-held calculators and television sets.

We're W. R. Grace & Co. A $6½ billion company producing chemicals, natural resources and consumer products.

We do business throughout the world, but we can't sit back and watch America lose its competitive edge. We won't be spectators to that event.

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Increased individual initiative, coupled with a willingness to take on more responsibility, will pay off immeasurably for each of us and for our nation.

We don't think we're asking too much of ourselves or of anyone else: Just the kind of energy and creativity that has already given the world everything from the computer chip to the curveball.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

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MARCH 3, 1982

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Emergency Procedures

Here are some tips, supplied by the United States government, about what to do in that Russian nuclear bomb attack. The instructions tell you to "Save These Plans—They May Save Your Life."

You should know the "attack warning signal"—a three- to five-minute rising and falling sound "on sirens, whistles, horns, or other devices." It's not likely, the government explains, but there might be a flash from a nuclear explosion near you: "*Take cover instantly in the best place available.*" The directions emphatically warn: "*Never look at the flash of an explosion or the nuclear fireball—it could cause permanent blindness.*"

There are helpful hints in the government's 98-page guide, entitled "In Time of Emergency," which is to be circulated among local newspapers. It is being made available through a branch of the Office of Public Affairs, Federal Emergency Management Agency. For example, on the question of what to do with pets. During a nuclear attack pets could be left in a cellar with a few weeks' supply of food.

The authors are upbeat: "Would survivors of nuclear attack envy the dead?" they ask. Their answer: "Experts Say No." They continue, "Studies indicate that by one week after the last detonation, no part of the United States would have dose rates higher than 50/R hr. (Roentgens per hour). In the overwhelming majority of the country, rates would be far lower." That sounds comforting, doesn't it? (Roentgen, incidentally, is the standard measurement of gamma and X-ray radiation.)

Way back in the days of Richard Nixon, the tension between Russia and the United States seemed to be decreasing. "Detente" was invented, and hopeful people could see a time when fallout shelters would seem ridiculous. The intellectual debate in those days was whether or not a nuclear war could be limited. Now there has been a drastic deterioration of U.S.-Russian relations. One element, at least, in the Reagan Administration believes that we face a total and irreconcilable conflict with Moscow if, in fact, we are not already in it.

The Reagan budget sets aside money for fallout shelters, which implies that somebody will survive a nuclear war and that, in fact, somebody may win one. The three *New Yorker* articles by Jonathan Schell on nuclear war, "The Fate of the Earth," rather incline to the view that in a full-scale nuclear holocaust, mankind faces extinction. When you get into an international nose-thumbing game such as the one we are in at the present, he argues, sooner or later somebody will drop a bomb. The other country will retaliate. There would be fireballs, thermal pulses, blast waves, mass fires, poison fallouts, and destruction of protective ectosystem layers. Fallout shelters would do no good, and you wouldn't have to bother about feeding your pets either. There are now 20,000 megatons of nuclear explosive power ready to go, and more added every day.

Reagan's expanded defense budget would almost double the amount proposed for fallout shelters and civil defense in the next fiscal year, increasing the figure from $134 million to $252 million. *Newsweek* proclaims: "Fallout Shelters: Making a Comeback." The London-based *Economist* goes into greater detail. Although only about 5 percent of Gallup Poll respondents last year believed they would survive a nuclear attack, the magazine says that the Administration rejects such pessimism. It thinks shelters might be as useful in daunting the Russians before a nuclear attack as afterward.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has distributed 15 newspaper columns to 3,300 local civil defense directors, who will hand them over to local newspapers when the time seems right. FEMA has adopted a "crisis relocation planning" program, and in case of attack it would evacuate 380 areas designated as "high risk." FEMA claims that this would save up to 80 percent of the population. The program will be tested at Plattsburgh, New York.

If you believe that Russian-U.S. animosity will continue, if you think that all international ills stem from Moscow, if you regard an armed test of strength as inevitable, then Reagan's program makes sense. It has a kind of family resemblance to what we are doing with the federal budget, which projects $345 billion in deficits over a four-year term. This incredible experiment in government bookkeeping is founded on the fragile hope that it will all be set right in the end by supply-side economics.

Reagan has had a bad press on both the international and the domestic side. On the international side, George F. Kennan denounced the idea of an irreconcilable conflict with Russia: "These are not the marks of maturity and realism one expects of the diplomacy of a great power," he says. "They are the marks of intellectual primitivism and naiveté unpardonable in a great government—yes, even naiveté, because there is a naiveté of cynicism and suspicion just as there is a naiveté of innocence."

On the domestic side, criticism has come from impeccable right-of-center sources. The *Wall Street Journal*'s Washington bureau chief, Norman Miller, declared, "It is fundamentally unfair for the Administration to concentrate almost exclusively on cutting assistance to the poor while simultaneously providing an excessive array of tax breaks to affluent persons and corporations."

Reagan is a hard man to figure. He is trying to revitalize NATO, contain the Soviets, and present a united front at home. Yet he has ended the Carter embargo on grain to the Soviet Union, he is fighting the proposed Siberia-to-Europe gas pipeline which France and Germany support, and in his domestic family he retains budget director David Stockman, who at one time mocked his budget, as well as Cabinet members Weinberger and Haig, who often seem to be carrying on separate foreign policies. We assume it will all clear up in time.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MARCH 3, 1982

MAN OF LA MANSION

When we likened Ronald Reagan to Don Quixote in this space on February 10, we hardly expected that the President would acknowledge the parallel. In his budget message, though, he has all but explicitly done so. And our Man of La Mancha lacks even a Sancho Panza to ride along with him. Against the urging, advice, and pleading by his White House staff, his Cabinet, Republican leaders in Congress, the Democratic opposition, independent economists, and financial market analysts, the Federal Reserve, and our terrified European allies, President Reagan vows to continue his high-deficit economic crusade. Here is his song, from Page 11 of the budget: "Our task is to persevere; to stay the course; to shun retreat; to weather the temporary dislocations and pressures that must inevitably accompany the restoration of national economic, fiscal, and military health." It can almost be sung to the tune of "The Impossible Dream," except that Mr. Reagan is not tilting at windmills or acting on stage. He is responsible for managing an economy on which hundreds of millions of people, in the U.S. and abroad, depend for their well-being. He is making a mess of it, and thereby threatening his own Presidency.

We do not dispute the basic tenets of Reaganomics—that the growth rate of social spending needs to be slowed, that more needs to be spent on defense, and that tax cuts are needed to reinvigorate the private economy. Part of Jimmy Carter's tragedy was that he understood all these necessities, but not until it was too late to formulate a coherent four-year economic program that his party and the country could accept. Now Democrats do accept the need for domestic cuts, tax cuts, and defense increases, and their differences with most Republicans (Ronald Reagan excepted) are matters of degree. But our differences with the President are so great as to constitute fundamental differences in kind: Democrats and liberals want to cut spending and taxes equitably, and to increase defense gradually and moderately; President Reagan wants to shower benefits on the rich, on corporations, and on defense contractors—and have the poor (and, increasingly, the middle class) pay the bill.

But Mr. Reagan's numbers do not add up. Practically and politically, he cannot squeeze enough money out of social spending to pay for the tax decreases and defense increases he has proposed. His 1983 budget shows a deficit of $91.5 billion, assuming he can get Congress to enact $55.9 billion in new spending cuts and revenue increases, which he can't, and assuming that the 10 percent tax cut scheduled for July 1 lifts the economy out of recession later this year, which is in doubt. Mr. Reagan's budget for future years contemplates booming growth in the economy—thanks to supply-side effects of his tax cuts—and decreased deficits. The Congressional Budget Office has a different, less glorious, scenario. It anticipates that the deficit for fiscal 1983 will be $157 billion. It judges that growth rates will be in the range of 3.5 percent in future years, rather than the 5 percent Mr. Reagan contemplates, and that the deficits will balloon to $188 billion in

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1984, $208 billion in 1985, and $248 billion in 1987.

Mr. Reagan himself used to say that deficits were harmful to the economy because the government's need to borrow crowded out private investors, cutting productivity and the economy's chances to bounce back from recession. Unwilling to admit that he and Congress cut taxes too drastically last year, and determined to stand fast in fighting that invincible foe, the federal government, Mr. Reagan has been forced to pretend that deficits don't matter.

But, of course, they do matter—especially if they go right on rising regardless of economic conditions. They will send interest rates soaring even higher than they are now. Continued high interest rates will mean ruination for small businesses and farms, and will increase unemployment. They also will intensify the friction between the U.S. and Europe, whose leaders fear that their countries' ability to recover from recession will be crippled as potential investors ship their money to the U.S.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

During a speaking tour of the Midwest, President Reagan called on his opponents to put forward alternatives or to shut up and enact his plan. Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina was ready with just such an alternative, with encouragement from Senate Republican leader Howard Baker. Mr. Hollings's plan is dazzling in its simplicity. It calls for a freeze on defense spending and on all government programs (including Social Security) whose benefits are indexed to inflation. Mr. Hollings also would forego the 10 percent tax cut due this July and halve the cut due next July. He estimates that the deficit could be chopped to a manageable $42 billion this year and down to nothing in fiscal 1985.

The Hollings proposal was instantly rejected by President Reagan, who wants to keep his defense increases and his tax cuts, too. Mr. Hollings's plan is indeed flawed, but the concept behind it—the across-the-board freeze on government benefits—deserves serious consideration as a way to hold down federal spending and to do it equitably. A freeze amounts to a real reduction in benefits by whatever the current inflation rate (it is now 7 percent), but it hits every recipient equally. Mr. Reagan's cuts, by contrast, are miserably inequitable. Child nutrition gets chopped 9.4 percent, Medicaid 10.4, Aid to Families with Dependent Children 17.5, education 17.9, food stamps 19.1, guaranteed college loans 23, low-income energy assistance 25.8, and job training 46.2—all on top of the large cuts enacted last year. Social Security (largely a middle-class benefit) gets no cut at all, and veterans compensation, civil service retirement, and Medicare all go down less than 5 percent. Mr. Hollings figures that $24 billion could be saved in fiscal 1983 by freezing only those entitlement programs which are indexed to inflation. An across-the-board freeze on all civilian programs would bring the budget even closer to balance.

Liberals and others who say that defense should bear a disproportionate share of cuts ignore the fact that until the late years of the Carter Administration, defense was cut continuously, while social programs boomed. From 1963 to 1973, defense outlays represented 7.9 percent of GNP. For 1981, they were at 5.6 percent. By contrast, social insurance programs represented 3.9 percent of GNP in the 1963-73 period, and 6.9 percent last year. Defense needs to be upgraded. But it does not need to be upgraded as fast as the Reagan Administration proposes. The Administration is calling for a probably indigestible one-year jump in defense spending of 10.5 percent, discounting inflation, which would bring defense up to 6.3 percent of GNP. It's hard to make much of a short-term dent in these figures, because quick cuts tend to come out of the funds provided to keep existing forces combat-ready—a bad way to save money, as Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin explains (see "Defense's Catch-22," page 11). But savings have to be found, and one place for Congress to start is with the $5 billion budgeted this year for the B-1 bomber. More money yet can be saved by canceling or stretching out other big-ticket systems.

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The federal budget can be brought closer to balance, too, by reversing last year's tax cuts—but not necessarily by Senator Hollings's method of canceling the individual tax rate cuts. Far better would be the imposition of consumption taxes on liquor, cigarettes, and gasoline, the elimination of corporate tax breaks voted in 1981, and the closing of loopholes. As Mr. Reagan's own Council of Economic Advisers just pointed out in its Economic Report to the President, last year's corporate tax cuts created wild distortions in the benefits available from investment by various kinds of industries. The mining, auto, and transportation industries actually will get government subsidies as a result of their investments. The oil industry will have its effective tax rate cut from 35 percent to 1 percent, while other industries will benefit less. The result will be that capital, instead of flowing to the most promising investment opportunities, will flow where tax breaks are greatest. It's far more efficient simply to give tax breaks to individuals and let them decide where opportunities are greatest.

Other Democrats in Congress besides Mr. Hollings are planning to take up Mr. Reagan's challenge to propose alternatives. We urge them to fight to preserve the social gains won so painfully over the last half-century, while at the same time recognizing the economic necessity of budgetary restraint and the international necessity of a strong (and well-planned) defense. After the Reagan election victory of 1980, Americans were not listening to the Democratic Party. After the Reagan failures of 1981 and 1982, they are ready for a better message.

NOTEBOOK

□ WHEN ANWAR SADAT was assassinated, the Reagan Administration made use of the confusion that followed to persuade Senators to support the sale of Awacs to Saudi Arabia. With Sadat gone, the argument went, it was all the more important to support fellow moderates, such as the Saudis. Anwar would have wanted it that way. Well, during Secretary Weinberger's visit to Saudi Arabia the other day, the *New York Times* asked a high Saudi official if any good at all had come out of Camp David. His answer? "Only the death of Sadat." Saudi officialdom is equally pungent in describing the nature of its connection to the U.S. When the Saudis were asking for Awacs, they talked of friendship, we talked of strategic consensus, and everyone talked of mutual respect and understanding. By the time Mr. Weinberger got to Riyadh this time around—four months after the Saudis had pocketed their Awacs contract—a different tune was being whistled. A Saudi general was asked whether the F-15 and Awacs sale had contributed to the political alliance between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. "You are just arms salesmen," he said. "And we pay cash." True enough. Anyhow, in this relationship, the U.S. pays compliments enough for both.

□ LAST DECEMBER WE reported in this column that B.T. Collins, Jerry Brown's chief of staff, had bad-mouthed his boss to a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*. Bella Stumbo, the author of that profile, more recently got Reagan confidante Justin Dart to loosen up. Dart, the most prominent member of the President's kitchen cabinet, told Stumbo that Jerry Ford is "a nice man, but he's not very smart." Ford, Dart said, "was pretty much of a nothing" as President. As for the current President, Dart said, "I don't think he's the most brilliant man I ever met—but he's got credibility." One would think that Dart would find the loquacious director of the Office of Management and Budget a kindred spirit. Not so. Dart called up the President after "The Education of David Stockman" appeared in the *Atlantic*, and urged Stockman's resignation. "I told the President—*twice* I told him—I said, 'He may be good with numbers, but he's a dumb sonofabitch, and he ought to be out of there.' "

□ A MASSIVE FOUL-UP at the Democratic National Committee has yielded a provocative datum about the younger generation, a colleague, Frank Van Riper of the New York *Daily News*, tells us. Not long ago, in one of its periodic attempts to raise money, the DNC decided to send a mailing about Social Security, signed by Claude Pepper, to a list of retired people. Only somebody pushed the wrong button on the computer, and the old folks' mailing got sent to a list of youthful backpackers instead. What happened next astounded the Dems. In direct mail circles, a return of 1 or 2 percent is considered successful. But the mixed-up mailing pulled an almost unheard-of 16 percent response. Is this a sign of premature fogyism—an obsession, unhealthy in the young, with future financial security? We prefer to think not. We prefer to look upon it as an encouraging expression of intergenerational solidarity.

□ "WE DO NOT YET have soup kitchens to relieve the growing hunger in the country," said an item in this space in our February 10 issue. But reality, these days, is always one jump ahead of hyperbole. A Vermont reader, L. Beatrice Pugley, now sends us a squib from the January 22 Brattleboro *Reformer* that begins, "St. Michael's Catholic church plans to establish a soup kitchen to provide hot meals at noon for anyone who needs one." This will come in handy once the federal cheese runs out. What the sisters of St. Michael's convent are doing is wholly commendable. Hungry

continued on page 9

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CORRESPONDENCE

POLAND AND THE WEST (CONT.)

To the editors:

I am surprised by the virulence of Mr. Wieseltier's response to Ronald Steel's analysis of events that succeeded Jaruzelski's junta ("Poland and the Ghost of Yalta," TNR, January 27). I did not read in Mr. Steel's article the apologia for containment that Wieseltier found there.

What I read in Steel's article was the first plausible explanation for the Western refusal to rescue Poland, or to have intervened in any substantial way when the Hungarians and Czechoslovakians earlier tried to throw off the Soviets. The only other conclusion I had reached before Steel's analysis was the even more cynical one—because *more* parochial and shortsighted—that Reagan and other Western leaders chose to safeguard the banks and the salesmen of pipeline equipment rather than the freedom of a nation. Steel proposes a logic for the Western cowardice: a logic, not a justification.

I thank Wieseltier for his passion and Steel for his exposition. We need both.

L.M. Eklund
New York, New York

THE JOINT CHIEFS AND KOREA

To the editors:

Robert Divine's review of Joseph Goulden's book, *Korea: the Untold Story of the War* ("America's Forgotten War," TNR, February 17), contains an ill-founded criticism of the conduct of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, i.e., that they should have exercised a "more aggressive role in shaping national policy." While admitting that JCS Chairman Omar Bradley and Army Chief Lawton Collins told the President that sending forces to Korea did not leave enough available for other commitments, the review faults them because "they did not press the point." But how were they to "press" it? By sedition? By mutiny against civilian authority? The book review doesn't take into account the implications of civilian supremacy over the military. The JCS may be the President's chief military advisers, but he is under no obligation to take their advice. And once the President of the United States has made a policy decision, the JCS have no choice but to carry it out and have no right to try to force a different course upon the President.

Joseph Forbes
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

UNIVERSALISTS UNITE

To the editors:

Regarding T.N.'s "Entrapment" (Washington Diarist, TNR, February 10), Unitarian Universalists have no church authority figure with which to identify, but they are justifiably proud to be able to identify with many well-known humanitarian-minded people. Name-dropping probably will not cause anyone to join a church, but it may prompt a "religious seeker" to inquire why some respected public figures found this particular church congenial to them.

John S. Griffin
Indianapolis, Indiana

BRAND-NEW FEDERALISM

To the editors:

The editorial, "Reagan's Articles of Confederation" (TNR, February 10), wisely points out that the Aid to Families with Dependent Children and food stamp programs belong under federal jurisdiction because of the different abilities and willingnesses of states to help the poor. However, there is a second compelling reason for keeping these programs at the federal level: prudent fiscal planning.

When the economy hits the skids, AFDC and food stamp enrollments rise and income tax revenues fall. The federal governments thus begins deficit spending without emergency Congressional action, and the economy receives an automatic infusion of dollars when it needs it the most. This "automatic stabilizer" does not afford complete protection against recession (as we well know), but we probably would be worse off without it.

But because many state constitutions forbid deficit spending, President Reagan's proposal would dismantle the stabilizer. If states had responsibility for AFDC and food stamps and we experienced another downturn, states would have no alternative but to cut benefits or raise taxes. The federal government, in the meantime, would not run as large a deficit because Medicaid spending, which it would assume under the President's plan, does not vary as greatly with employment levels as AFDC and food stamps. We would be applying the wrong fiscal medicine for the situation. The new federalism would set ourselves up for even more serious economic ills.

Peter J. Farmer
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

The arguments in your editorial "Reagan's Articles of Confederation" (TNR, February 10), are not convincing.

Why is it wrong for the poor in Mississippi to receive less welfare than in, say, California? Equalization of grants would seem only to encourage low income Mississippi workers to go on welfare, especially since they will then also be eligible for subsidized medical care. Why should not the poor travel to states whose productivity is evidently such that they can pay higher welfare grants? It seems irrational to encourage them to stay in states where the chances of finding employment are slimmer than in states of greater productivity.

TNR's real concern is that the states will be more "heartless" than Washington, but it assumes that (a) the current level and system of benefits is necessary to provide a safety net, and (b) all now on welfare are "truly poor." Neither assumption is necessarily true.

As a lawyer who has worked at Legal Aid and in the public sector, I have observed that many, if not the majority, of long-term welfare recipients are not inherently incapable of finding or holding jobs. Rather, they have opted quite rationally for subsidized leisure, instead of jobs which provide fewer satisfactions and little more income than their present lifestyles. Eventually their lifestyles make them, in fact, unemployable. Far worse, their children tend to develop the same habits of thought and conduct which have made their parents unemployable. In my experience, neither race nor handicaps nor educational levels explain the persistent dependence of such families on welfare.

There has grown up a highly vocal cadre of poverty professionals—bureaucrats, lawyers, social workers, etc.—

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people need to be fed. Still, the Brattleboro soup kitchen is at least as much a rebuke to the President's call for voluntary action as it is a response to it.

□ SENATOR GARY HART has struck a small blow for political truth in packaging. Mr. Hart published a piece about military reform in the February 14 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, and the identifying blurb accompanying the article read as follows: "Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado, is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. *His legislative aide, William S. Lind, helped him prepare this article.*" The italics are ours, but the admirable honesty is Senator Hart's.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "After a long interregnum, during which Germany has been ruled by emergency decrees, the Reichstag has met and set the date of the presidential election as March 13. Hindenburg has already been nominated on a nonpartisan ticket. Opposing him will be a Communist, probably Thaelmann; Hitler himself, running for his National Socialist party despite the serious questions as to the legality of his German citizenship; and Colonel Theodore Düsterbeg as the joint candidate of the steel helmets and the Hugenbergists. If we assume that the opposing parties will do no better than they did in the Reichstag elections of 1930, the reelection of Hindenburg would be more than probable. But the Hitlerites, who received 6,400,000 votes in that election, are likely to poll from ten to twelve million this time." ("The Week," March 2, 1932.)

A proposal for law without justice?

BURGER'S GOLDEN CALF

IN OUR LITIGIOUS society, we are conditioned to rely upon lawyers and judges to resolve private disputes. The staple scene of Western movies is perpetually reenacted: at the first sign of trouble, an American reaches for his hired gun and files a lawsuit. It comes as something of a surprise, therefore, when Chief Justice Warren Burger, speaking before the American Bar Association, ardently recommends arbitration and other forms of dispute settlement to stem what he describes as the avalanche of litigation that engulfs American society.

It is worth noting that our history is replete with examples of nonlegal dispute settlement, far removed from lawyers and courts. Diverse communities of Americans, bound by ideology, piety, ethnicity, or tribal identity, have turned to arbitration in pursuit of a harmonious alternative to destructive individual contentiousness. Historically, arbitration and mediation expressed an ideology of communitarian justice without formal law, an equitable process based on reciprocal access and trust among community members. Whether practiced by utopian Christians or mercenary merchants, arbitration flourished as an indigenous form of community self-government.

BUT ANY RESEMBLANCE between those neglected chapters of our national experience and current arbitration proposals is purely coincidental. Today arbitration is the golden calf of law reformers who worship judicial efficiency and are quite prepared to divert the claims of poor people from court to achieve it. Arbitration, once an independent alternative to litigation, is quickly becoming the stunted offshoot of legal proceedings, a form of trial presided over by lawyers without the due process guarantees that adjudication, at least in theory, provides.

It is necessary to beware of the seductive appeal of arbitration. Enthusiasm comes primarily from politically conservative members of the bench and bar, following a series of substantial legal victories by Have-Nots against the Haves: tenants against landlords, consumers against producers, prisoners against wardens, patients against malpracticing doctors, native Americans against the government, to cite only a few conspicuous examples within the past decade. All the victors have been designated already as the presumed beneficiaries of arbitration proposals. As these disputes are diverted to arbitration, courts are less available to those who need them most to redress grievances, to provide equal protection, to reallocate power in the interest of fairness. The shift to arbitration, like the attempt to scuttle the Legal Services Corporation, represents a political backlash against the assertion of legal rights in court.

An avalanche of litigation is the price Americans pay for their deification of individual rights, devotion to private property, and commitment to the supremacy of law. To be sure, this creates a vicious spiral: the more law, the more intense the yearning for alternatives. But since law protects the expansive freedom to compete, acquire, retain, and bequeath, it is not likely to recede unless Americans decide to become un-American. Until then, alternative dispute settlement will preserve a two-track justice system. It will dispense speedy, inexpensive, informal "justice" to people with "small" claims and "minor" disputes. Justice in court will be reserved for the affluent. There are no pending proposals before the American Bar Association for leading law firms to divert their corporate clients to arbitration proceedings.

The Chief Justice has reminded those who read between his lines that our legal institutions are the source of considerable public dissatisfaction with the administration of justice (as Roscoe Pound first told the

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ABA seventy-five years ago). It is doubtful, however, that diversion of disputes to arbitration and mediation is the solution. If law is the bulwark of freedom, an article of faith among its champions, why is there such pressure from them for alternatives? If access to justice is the problem, how can it be resolved by increasing the number of exits? Is the Chief Justice recommending justice without law, law without justice, or the worst of alternatives, injustice without legal redress?

JEROLD S. AUERBACH

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The blarin' of the green.

IRISH BURLESQUE

GIVEN THE ETHNIC mythology, the revolutionary romanticism, and the literary hyperbole which color most American perceptions of Ireland, it's remarkable how uninspired, if not downright mean, the protagonists of the "Irish troubles" appear at close range. Most Americans view the struggle for the Auld Sod through a prism in which the lightheadedness of Finian's Rainbow is intermingled with the anglophobia and patriotic outrage of the Boston Massacre. But not all Irishmen—as the residents of Belfast or Derry will testify—are martyrs or leprechauns.

The tawdry melodrama that characterizes much of Irish political reality got a rare American airing in late January, when rival propaganda delegations of "No Surrender" Loyalists and "Brits Out" IRA dignitaries came to the U.S. to further their causes. Neither delegation was treated with much dignity by the U.S. government.

The Loyalist troupe's tour, which had taken such friends of Ulster as Senator Strom Thurmond and the Reverends Bob Jones Junior and III months to organize, was to have been headed by the self-anointed scourge of popery, the Reverend Ian Paisley. But the State Department denied Paisley a visa, so he sent his wife Eileen in his place. At the same time, two leading spokesmen for Republican groups linked to the IRA, including Owen Carron, a member of the British Parliament, were heading for an annual "Prisoners' Aid" fundraising dinner in New York via Canada. Carron and his companion, a Sinn Fein publicist named Danny Morrison, hoped to confront Paisley directly for the benefit of the U.S. media, perhaps on the avenues of Manhattan. But the U.S. government has a longstanding policy against granting visas to IRA members. Carron and Morrison therefore tried to sneak into the U.S. through Buffalo and Niagara Falls by using bogus Canadian identification. They were promptly nabbed by American immigration inspectors who had been specially alerted.

Thus was forestalled the possibility of an authentic Ulster sectarian clash in American streets. But the Irish episode couldn't be disposed of simply by deportation. With the arrest of Carron and Morrison, the propaganda fires were stoked. IRA supporters in the U.S. quickly recognized the making of two new martyrs. The American government was denounced for its purported connivance in the colonialist schemes of Margaret Thatcher, and for its perfidy in allowing some Loyalist spokesmen (i.e., Mrs. Paisley) into the U.S., while refusing the IRA the same privilege.

MEANWHILE, THE LOYALIST delegation, headed by Mrs. Paisley, entered the U.S. without any fuss about visas and went straight to the National Press Club in Washington. The purpose of their mission was twofold: to convince Americans to stop funding the IRA, and to promote Ulster Loyalist solidarity among Americans. The tour was to have begun with a fire-breathing sermon at the Press Club by the Reverend Paisley, castigating the IRA and its "Communist backers," followed by a quick three-day tour of the U.S. and a rousing rally at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, from which Paisley holds an honorary doctorate. The Loyalists were then scheduled to return to Washington for a series of meetings with leading U.S. politicians and State Department officials, and finally to go to New York to make their case to the National Council of Churches and the *New York Times* editorial board.

The Paisley-less delegation faithfully followed this itinerary, but, without Paisley himself, inspiration and interest flagged. Not a single American network showed up at the Press Club to record Mrs. Paisley reading her husband's speech, and all she got from the newspapers, apart from a not unsympathetic profile in the *Washington Post*'s "Style" section, were darts of abuse from syndicated liberals Mary McGrory and Colman McCarthy. And the Loyalists seemed oblivious to the potential pitfalls of displaying their Protestant evangelical solidarity with Bob Jones University at the very moment when B.J.U. was stirring up a whirlwind of negative publicity because of the dispute over tax exemptions for schools with racial bias.

In San Francisco, immediately after a speech by Loyalist spokesman Peter Robinson, a British member of Parliament who is sometimes described as Paisley's gofer, there were a few moments of drama when the audience was asked to clear the room, apparently because of a threat of some kind. Robinson's appearance at the Los Angeles Press Club was picketed by

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about eight IRA supporters, and, in New York, American IRA sympathizers picketed the Loyalist delegation's hotel. The Ulstermen were obliged to register under assumed names. But these events attracted scarcely a yawn from the American media, and the Loyalist delegation left the U.S. virtually unnoticed, and certainly unmourned.

The IRA was somewhat more successful in rallying its American supporters and in obtaining favorable notice by the media. Certainly the Republicans' show was more entertaining. Morrison's and Carron's arrest received mention on the CBS Evening News and squibs in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. In Buffalo, it was played as the biggest international story since acid rain. Carron and Morrison took full advantage of the propaganda potential of their predicament. They refused to wear prison clothing, just like back home. They loudly claimed they were being held incommunicado. They refused legal assistance so they could make political speeches when they were asked at their arraignment who was representing them. They even told American supporters that their arrest might provoke them to go on a hunger strike, and they passed the word to reporters via intermediaries that they abandoned the idea only because authorities at the Erie County jail near Buffalo were reasonably civil.

The Immigration Service and federal prosecutors' offices in Buffalo, if not exactly instigating brutality, did their part to keep the affair alive. Instead of quietly depositing the Irishmen on the Ontario end of the Peace Bridge, U.S. authorities filed felony charges and threatened to hold Carron and Morrison without bail until their trial in March. This gave American IRA sympathizers a plausible reason to appeal to their friends in Congress, the most loyal of whom (such as Mario Biaggi) had initially expressed some discomfort at Carron's and Morrison's border-crossing antics. The Congressional phone calls to Immigration authorities began to intensify. In the end, the Immigration Service and prosecutors decided both to deport Carron and Morrison immediately, and to indict them on criminal charges. Carron told me by phone from Toronto after his expulsion that he would love to come back to the U.S. for his criminal trial (scheduled for March), which he eagerly saw as another ripe opportunity for propaganda. But he pointed out that neither he nor Morrison had the money to return. According to Jack Penca, the Assistant U.S. Attorney in charge of the criminal prosecution, a court may order the U.S. government to reimburse defendants for their expenses in traveling "extreme" distances to criminal trials.

IN THE END Carron and Morrison did succeed in scoring a few dreary political points, particularly with committed Irish Americans. But the government's show transcended politics, producing elements of low comedy when it acknowledged it might have to pay transatlantic travel bills for men it had tried to keep out of the country in the first place. Awaiting the next act of the Buffalo drama, American IRA sympathizers reverted to more traditional patterns of bad taste: they convinced the organizers of the New York St. Patrick's Day parade to name as Honorary Grand Marshal Bobby Sands, the late IRA hunger striker whose seat in the British Parliament was taken over by Owen Carron.

The only participant in the Irish morass not yet visible in this affair is the British government. But according to a recent BBC World Service radio report, the British authorities are about to release for American consumption their own potted version of the origins of the Irish troubles. This is a government-produced film entitled "Northern Ireland Chronicle" (a better name, at least, than "Let Ulster Be Ulster"). A British government spokesman in New York told me the film would be shown only on request to select audiences: "It's not going to be playing on Third Avenue." No doubt Irish-American IRA and perhaps Loyalist supporters will find fault with the film. Then they will picket a few showings and mouth a few tired slogans. And it will be business as usual for the American end of the "Irish problem," a political burlesque mired in mock heroics and tedium, but with lethal results on the streets of Belfast.

MARK HOSENBALL

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Why readiness is so easy to cut.

DEFENSE'S CATCH-22

PRESIDENT REAGAN has proposed a defense budget totaling $258 billion. That is a 10 percent increase over last year, after taking inflation into account—significantly higher than the 7 percent annual real growth rate the President has declared to be his policy. With domestic programs being pared to the bone, and with record (and growing) deficits forecast as far into the future as we can see, even conservative Republicans think the defense budget is too much. But while debate rages on how much to cut from defense, the harder question of *where* to cut in defense gets neglected. And the problem Congress faces is that its budget process creates overwhelming incentives to cut the muscle out of defense, while leaving the fat intact.

There are really two defense budgets, one for budget authority (BA) and the other for outlays. BA is what

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Congress votes to put in the top of the funnel—it's the green light for the Pentagon to start spending money. Outlays are what come out the other end of the funnel—that is, the amount of money actually spent in any given year. When we decide to build a ship, for example, we vote the entire amount of BA the first year. But the outlays dribble out over the five or more years it actually takes to build the ship.

Congress votes on BA, but it is outlays that get spent and outlays that determine the size of the deficit; the only way to reduce this year's deficit is to reduce this year's outlays. Unless we want to junk a lot of half-built equipment, we can't tamper with outlays that are the result of BA voted in previous years. (That kind of spending, which designates this year as one of the so-called "out years," eats up nearly a third of any given year's defense outlays.) No, we have to get at this year's outlays by cutting new BA.

Suppose we set ourselves the task of knocking $10 billion off this year's deficit by cutting the defense budget. Now, as the accompanying table shows, only 10 percent of the sum authorized for aircraft procurement this year will be spent this year. So to get our $10 billion out of aircraft procurement, we would have to make a $100-billion cut in aircraft procurement BA. (This would be awkward, since there is only $35 billion in that line of the budget.) But to get that same $10 billion in outlay savings from Personnel, say, we would need a BA cut of only $10.2 billion, since 98 percent of the newly authorized funds in that category get spent the first year. Personnel, however, is sacrosanct, so we turn to the next best thing: Operations and Maintenance, with its 83 percent first-year outlay rate. Here a mere $12-billion BA cut will net us our $10 billion in outlay savings. It is painfully obvious which category—aircraft procurement or O&M—is the path of least resistance.

The trouble is that O&M cuts too often hit precisely the areas where we should spend money. One of the biggest problems facing the military is that planes can't fly and ships can't sail because they are sadly in need of repairs and spare parts. These maintenance problems have built up because year in and year out the hunt for places to cut defense ends with everyone landing on the Operations and Maintenance account.

Congress deserves much of the blame for this pattern, but not all of it. Administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have pruned the Operations and Maintenance area before sending budget requests to Congress. The armed sevices, too, invariably shave their own O&M requests to preserve big weapons systems in times of budget famine. The constituencies within the military band together behind new fighter planes, new tanks, and new destroyers. There is no constituency for such mundane items as exercises, training time, and stocks of spare parts.

Outlay Rates By Category

Percentage of first-year budget authority spent each year

	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year
PROCUREMENT	12%	37%	30%	11%	5%
Ships	2	12	18	18	18
Aircraft	10	45	36	7	2
Missiles	14	50	31	5	
Tanks	6	40	38	11	6
Ammunition	12	52	28	7	
RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST & EVALUATION	56	36	6	2	
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	83	14	2		
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION	8	36	30	13	7
PERSONNEL	98	2			
TOTAL	65	19	10	3	1

(Source: Congressional Budget Office)

Defense is traditionally a feast-or-famine business. Pentagon insiders now see themselves emerging from the Carter famine of zero real growth into the Reagan feast of real growth exceeding 7 percent per year. Starts and stops in the defense budget do not promote efficiency, and are especially hard on funds for military readiness. What's to be done to get us out of these ruts?

First, it is in everyone's interest that we replace feast-or-famine with a steadier spending line. Liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, should compromise on a defense spending pattern. Liberals should be willing to spend a bit more than they would like in those years in which they control the budget mechanism, and conservatives should be willing to spend less in the years in which they are on top. The country would profit in the long run.

Second, Congress needs to keep its eye on long-term budget trends. Treating the budget as an annual exercise in holding down the deficit *this year* guarantees the continuation of weapons programs that will not add much to spending this year but will add plenty to outyear spending. If we look only at the nickel on the sidewalk, we'll miss the dollar at the end of the block.

Third, it is a simple reality that if we are going to cut defense, Operations and Maintenance is going to be cut in some years—this one, for example. To those who protest that such cuts damage readiness, the defense

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establishment's answer is to say, in effect, "Look, son—don't you know there's not a war on?" But to limit the damage from such cuts, we should rank our military units by priority and channel O&M funds to them in that order. A shortage of spare parts should not be shared equally by all nineteen divisions; those units expected to respond first in an emergency should have unquestioned first call on spare parts.

We should not again allow ourselves to get into the position recalled by former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger. When the Mayaguez was seized by Cambodia in 1975, he ordered all Navy ships in the area to sail to the Gulf of Thailand. The ships sailed, most of them—but thanks to long-unmet maintenance needs, not a single one could do so at full speed.

LES ASPIN

Les Aspin, a Democratic Representative from Wisconsin, serves on the House Armed Services and Budget Committees.

THE GILDED AGE

LOW-BUDGET MOVIE

REEL 2 of Ronald Reagan's new picture, "Budget '83," has the leading man stepping over the prone body of an impecunious black person who has just been decked by the hero. Our movie star has now gotten hold of a white guy in a white shirt and, snip snip, he's scissoring off hunks of this fellow's tie.

Having discovered that the poor don't riot, the President is testing the thesis that the middle class are a bunch of overrated cream puffs. It's their turn to listen and believe when Dave Stockman's nose stiffens to a puncture point and he tells 'em Ayn Rand was right: there is no such thing as a free lunch. Don't look now, Mr. Sales Representative or Ms. Guidance Counselor, but that welfare cheat the Great Communicator told you about in the last campaign is you.

The biggest news in the 1983 budget is that the hearts of nice middle-class liberals no longer have to bleed for others; they can bleed for themselves. The Administration is going right for their *corazón*, right for what the upwardly mobile have always held dearest: education. The revolution in opportunity that began with the GI Bill after World War II is to be stalled in this budget and reversed in subsequent ones.

The number of federally guaranteed college student loans is to be tomahawked, and the leftovers are to be made conditional on the student's family taking a means test. If you want to help a man, you can either give him a fish or teach him how to fish, goes one of the Great Communicator's favorite bromides—except from now on he's charging for fishing lessons. Graduate students imprudent enough to have been born into middling circumstances will be billed the prevailing commercial interest rates on their school loans. The long-run consequence of this policy will be to force the sons and daughters of the middle class out of the liberal arts. Familiarity with literature, anthropology, or Baroque painting will again be the distinguishing possession of the children of the well-to-do; instead of revisiting "Brideshead" on the telly, we're going to relive it on the quad. This is an affirmative action budget for the moneyed, who will no longer be denied their birthright—admission to the freshman class at Princeton—just because some pushy grind from Jackson Heights or the San Fernando Valley hit the books and got high test scores.

From the GI Bill, down through Jimmy Carter's time, the country had gradually fixed things so that admission to higher education was by ability and diligence. Abandoning the hoity-toity, frat-dominated college of old, where excellence was a hip flask and a gentleman's C, America created a new kind of a society, the white-collar meritocracy—computerized, service-centered, science- and technology-based. We let the old red brick factories go, phased out the blue-collar occupations, and fashioned a new egalitarianism—not of the mob but of the business suit, the attaché case, and the credit card. Reagan's budget would abolish it.

Going, going, gone are also the many job-training programs for lower-class youth who screwed up and couldn't make it to college, and for established blue-collar workers whose industries have been demolished by time, technology, and foreign trade. In their place the guy in the sports coat with the aw shucks shake of the head offers his voluntary servitude camps, the free enterprise zones. And free they are, too—free not only of taxes but also of health regulations, the minimum wage, and safety rules.

FOR BONUSES, this budget's welfare cuts and work-fare rules will shake down the wages of county and municipal workers everywhere. When those plums of the labor market, the welfare mothers in their dresses with the irregular hem lines, fail to find work in the sainted private sector, they will be assigned "public service" jobs. It's only a matter of time before public sector administrators, strapped to stay within their budgets, figure out that they can bust their regular employees' rates by threatening to replace them with subminimum-wage work-fare corvées. If the job market stays bad enough long enough, we may see jurisdictions laying off employees, driving them onto welfare, and then getting them back via the forced labor route.

Nevertheless, this is a pro-family budget. It will promote familial togetherness by reducing purchasing

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power to a point where the grown-up kids can't afford to leave home. Many a mommy and daddy will be taking care of a pregnant daughter because the government no longer "intervenes" to make birth control information available to her. The two-generation family will become three-generational, though this won't guarantee that this nodule of Christian piety will say grace at dinner. (The kids can do their praying in school. In fact, they may have to.) Or the family might try off-budget sex education, à la Senator Jeremiah Denton: "Why didn't you cross your legs, you slut?"

The Reagan crew's approach to problems of public administration is not to improve a program, not to correct its deficiencies, not to make it better; it is to wreck it, and the easiest way to do that is to starve it to death in the budget. Thus, firm in the belief that the smog will never be so bad as to fog over the fifth hole at Pebble Beach during a Bob Hope-Jerry Ford-Celeb-Pro-Am benefit for the United Bunion Foundation, they're leaving enough money in the EPA budget to finance a limousine to take Anne Gorsuch to Congressional hearings so she can testify that at last you can fertilize a rosebush without a federal permit.

The same principles of public administration are being followed in the field of health. Preventive medicine is being re-privatized; after all, it's traditional for people to look after themselves in this highly personal area. Rich folk have long vacations, fat farms, corporate squash courts, diets supervised by experts flown in from the Mayo Clinic, and very private, very attentive doctors. Poor people, in winter, have healthful exercise in the snow. And in summer they can sit in the sun, a plentiful source of vitamin D.

IF YOU DO GET SICK, this budget proposes some interesting things in re hospital reimbursement formulas. Medicare and Medicaid are to be rejiggered so that payments will never, and can never, cover costs. By law and regulation they must fall 2 percent short. In other words, the rules are to be set to provide incentives to cut, not costs, but the standard of care of anyone unlucky enough to have to depend on a government program for nursing or medical care. Hospitals can try to make up the difference between payments and costs by soliciting contributions from generous citizens like President Reagan. In case not everybody is as free with his checkbook as the Borax impresario, hospitals can also close the gap by charging their other, richer patients more. That will be a boon to the big for-profit hospital chains like Humana, Inc. (neat name, no?), which will skim off the cream and leave the writhing, importunate masses in decaying public hospitals or in teaching institutions where they can be experimented upon.

The guns budget is so big that even the war hawks in Congress are tripping over their own talons. In truth, it's even bigger than the figure most often bandied about, $216 billion. On top of that immodest sum, the Administration wants to spend every dime from every past military budget which the Pentagon, through inefficiency or inadvertent efficiency, had not spent over the years. So the actual amount of military spending will be $258 billion, but even that understates the real numbers by many billions. For example, much of the money spent by the Department of Energy is for military purposes, to wit, making the stuff for nuclear bombs. Cut this item out of DOE's budget and almost nothing is left, particularly with the Commander-in-Chief wanting to stop payment on all nonnuclear peacetime alternate energy research. (Incidentally, nothing could better play into the hands of the Saudis. Their strategy is to keep the price of oil just low enough to discourage R&D that would perfect substitute fuels priced competitively with their own. Ergo, it's now, when oil prices are slumping and the market is slack, that we should be breaking our fannies on this research.)

THE MILITARY BUDGET itself is a just-ask-for-it list of everything anybody who ever played toy soldiers could desire. There's a $761-million trip down Navy nostalgia lane to refurbish two World War II battleships, a dreadnought apiece for Admiral Reagan and Commodore Bush. (Think of the picnics they can have on the fantail.) There is $2 billion for the M-1 battle tank they've had up on blocks for a dozen years and still can't get to work. Since it has been the practice to name tanks after famous generals, they should consider calling this clunker the Westmoreland. By the way, in addition to the billions spent trying to develop this clumsy tool of war (it has been described as an armor-plated flower pot), the budget also includes $200 million for inventing a cannon for it and at least $40 million for earth-moving equipment to go into combat alongside it. The gun it has won't shoot, and the poor thing's too delicate to dig its own hole.

The forlorn old homeless MX missile is in the budget at $4.5 billion, more than double what was spent on it this year, although no one yet knows where or how it is to be domiciled. In the pipeline is a plan to get the MX housed, at least temporarily, by asking Nancy Reagan to head up a new Foster Missile Program. She would make television appearances asking people whose children have grown up and left the nest to adopt an MX missile. The missiles would come in four basic styles, Colonial, White and Gold Imperial, Contemporary, and Laguna Beach. (The Foster Missile Program is not to be confused with tithing, which is giving every tenth slice of processed American cheese to the poor.) That's this year's budget, which leaves us defenseless against the domestic enemies of ignorance, disease, and want, but with battleship and bulldozer at the ready in the common defense against foreign invaders.

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

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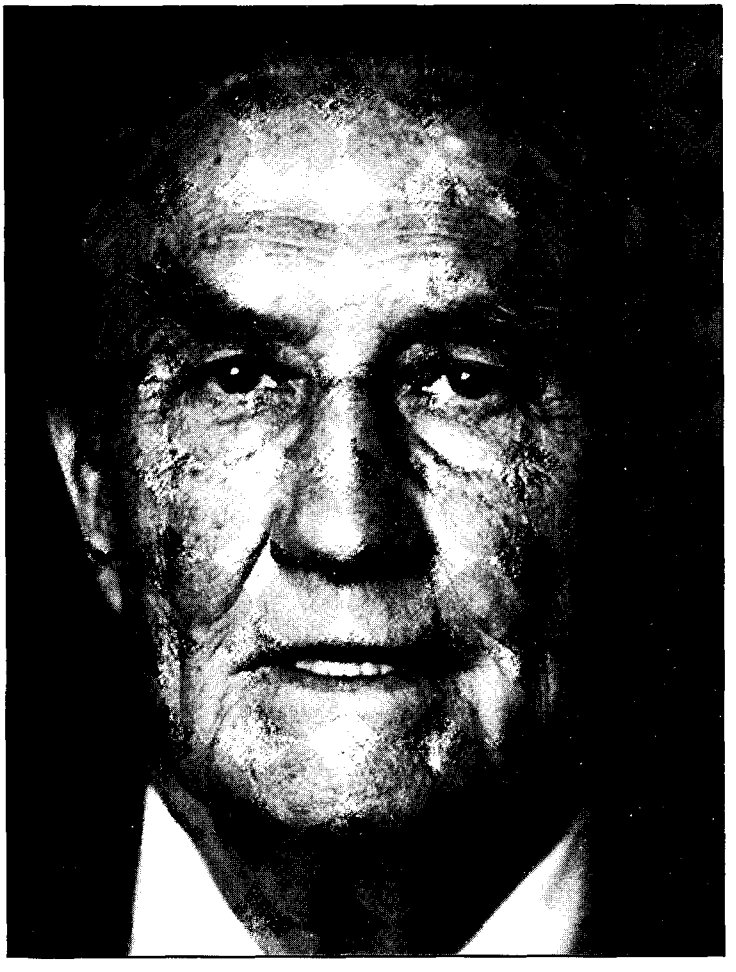
An extraordinary history.

STROM THURMOND'S ROOTS

BY DAVID BRUCK

THE CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION of the 1960s is now everywhere on the defensive. Only seventeen years have passed since the voting rights campaign in Selma, Alabama, electrified the nation and overwhelmed the structure of black disenfranchisement. Today it's hard even to remember the struggle. To most white Americans, the issue of equal rights for black people has been taken care of. There are many more pressing concerns. And as this mood settles over the country, men and arguments that seemed forever discredited in that springtime of 1965, having bided their time, are back.



STROM THURMOND BY SHEPARD SHERBELL

"I've always believed in and worked for the right to vote for all people," J. Strom Thurmond, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, declared on the floor of the U.S. Senate last June. Senator Thurmond was explaining his position on extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was (as it had been ever since 1965) that the Act was unfair and discriminatory because "it singles out only certain states" (mainly in the South) for federal scrutiny of their voting laws and procedures.

Now the 1982 Voting Rights Act extension bill, which Thurmond describes as "terrible" and "worse than the present law," is in the hands of his Judiciary Committee. Opposition to the Voting Rights Act from Southern Senators and committee chairmen is nothing new: the original act had to be steered carefully past Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland's Judiciary Committee, which had failed to report 121 out of 122 civil rights bills committed to it over the previous thirteen years. But by now many Southern politicians seem willing to live with the Voting Rights Act. South Carolina's entire House delegation voted in favor of the 1982 extension bill last fall, and the measure is now co-sponsored by no fewer than nine Southern Senators, including Ernest F. Hollings, Thurmond's Democratic South Carolina colleague. So Senate Republicans whom Thurmond may try to rally this spring for a Pickett's Charge against the House-passed voting rights legislation could well find themselves wondering why their usually pragmatic Judiciary chairman should be taking so inflexible a stand on this particular issue, with seemingly so little to be gained.

It's a question that is even beginning to concern some of Thurmond's supporters back home, many of whom have admired him for his adroitness at compromise on other racial questions in recent years. "Senator Thurmond is a very pragmatic politician," a longtime associate remarked privately a few weeks ago, "but the Voting Rights Act is one issue that I've just never been able to reason with him about."

To be sure, there is a somewhat new line of argu-

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ment against the Voting Rights Act extension bill which can be found in such neoconservative journals as the *Public Interest*, and which holds that the Voting Rights Act was necessary and effective in 1965 but is now being pushed too far by social experimenters who want to impose a racial quota system on American political life. If Senator Thurmond does decide to use the full powers of his chairmanship to weaken the Voting Rights Act extension bill, he will most likely frame the issue in such terms. But this year's political buzzwords don't explain the tenacity of Thurmond's opposition to the voting rights extension bill. That comes from somewhere else.

Though the 79-year-old Judiciary chairman still likes to describe himself as a "country boy from the red clay hills of Edgefield County," he seldom mentions Edgefield when he talks about the Voting Rights Act. That's understandable, since the small western South Carolina county where Thurmond grew up and began his political career is an especially stark example of why the Voting Rights Act needs to be both extended and strengthened.

But Strom Thurmond's home county is of interest for another reason as well. The century-old battle against black voting rights was fought all over the South, but there is probably no Southern county where it was fought with more fanaticism and brutality than in Edgefield. Just three generations separate Strom Thurmond from the Civil War, and in each of those generations it was Edgefield that led the crusade for white supremacy in South Carolina. What happened in Edgefield left a devastating impact on all of South Carolina and on the South, and spawned a bitter legacy to which Thurmond may be the last heir.

WHEN STROM THURMOND'S grandfather, Corporal George Washington Thurmond, CSA, trudged home in defeat from Appomattox to his Edgefield farm in the spring of 1865, he was returning to a county in which the newly freed blacks outnumbered their former white masters by more than two to one. Prewar Edgefield had been South Carolina's most prosperous cotton-growing district, and had produced many of the state's leading politicians and military men. Now the white landowners had not merely lost their slave labor force, but faced the unimaginable prospect of being governed by men elected by—perhaps even including—their former slaves.

During 1867, federal military registrars fanned out through the conquered Southern states to register the freed slaves to vote. By October 1867, Edgefield's black registered voters outnumbered whites 4,300 to 2,500. But as the newly enfranchised freedmen went to the polls in the county's first Reconstruction election, in June 1868, Edgefield's ex-Confederate general M. W. Gary was already rallying the country's landowners to a policy of resistance. Criticizing his fellow Democrats elsewhere in the state for their expressions of willingness to accept limited black enfranchisement, Gary urged his Edgefield neighbors to stand firm on principle. "If one negro is allowed to vote," he warned, "you may as well let them all do so, for you have consented to make this a mongrel government, to make the children of your former slaves the successful competitors of your children for the honors of the State."

INTENSE AS such feelings were, Edgefield's ex-Confederates were motivated by more than racial pride. For if these Edgefield planters were going to rebuild a way of life like the one that defeat and Emancipation had shattered, they had to find a way of restoring their mastery over the black freedmen on whose labor they had always depended. In the struggle between Edgefield's land-hungry ex-slaves and its threatened white gentry, neither side had any rights—whether to its share of each year's crop or to the land itself—unless it had sympathetic public officials willing to enforce those rights against the claims of the other side. Such agrarian struggles for the political means to economic survival are often marked by a particular savagery. Edgefield's would prove no exception.

General Gary's appeals for racial militancy apparently came too late to prevent the Democrats' defeat in the June 1868 local elections, but Gary's followers were ready for the Presidential campaign of that autumn. After several weeks of terrorist attacks on black Republican sympathizers throughout the county, armed Democratic night riders finally forced Edgefield's election commissioners to cancel the November election altogether, and the black laborers who braved threats, firings, and floggings to walk to the polls found when they arrived that no voting was taking place.

Nevertheless, Edgefield's blacks extended their political power in the county over the next several years. Led by members of Edgefield's small prewar freedmen community, and by returned black Union veterans, Edgefield's black candidates won election at various times as county commissioners, state representatives and senators, and as sheriff, prosecutor, clerk of court, and probate judge.

The record of these black officials is for the most part lost, and not much survives apart from the partisan charges of corruption leveled by the displaced white minority. But there is little question that the county's laborers and tenant farmers found a sympathetic forum for their grievances at the Edgefield Courthouse during those years. Historian Orville V. Burton, in a recent study of Edgefield's Reconstruction, concludes that the county's black leaders were "faithful to their people, and delivered for the poor as no South Carolina politicans have done before or since."

But while Edgefield's blacks were solidifying their electoral control at the courthouse, the county's white landowners were steadily strengthening their Demo-

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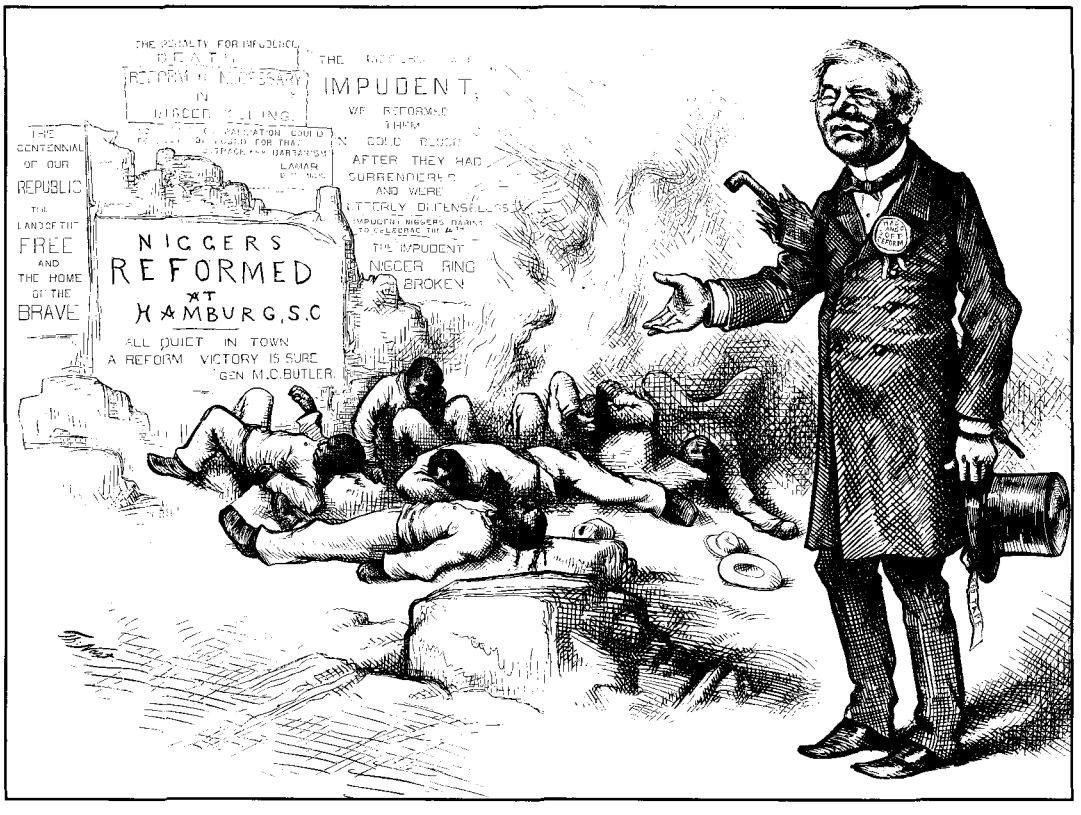
cratic "rifle clubs," and preparing for a violent confrontation with the black Republican majority. It came in July 1876, when General M. C. Butler's white Edgefield volunteers succeeded in provoking a pitched gun battle with a black militia unit in the Savannah River town of Hamburg. After capturing and disarming the surviving black militiamen, Butler's men summarily executed five of their prisoners.

Sensitive to the danger of a bad press up North, Edgefield's Democrats were careful to portray the killings at Hamburg as a response to the "insolence" and provocations of the black militia. But forty years later, Edgefield's U.S. Senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, a participant in the incident, would proudly recall that Edgefield's leading white landowners had gone to Hamburg looking for a fight, "as it was generally believed that nothing but bloodshed and a good deal of it could answer the purpose of redeeming the state from negro and carpetbag rule." Tillman and his companions counted the Hamburg incident a great success, as "the purpose of our visit was to strike terror, and the next morning when the negroes who had fled to the swamp returned to the town, the ghastly sight which met their gaze of seven dead negroes lying stark and stiff, certainly had its effect."


IMPUDENT
AFTER THEY HAD SURRENDERED AND WERE UTTERLY DEFENSELESS
THE IMPUDENT NIGGER RING BROKEN
THE CENTENNIAL OF OUR REPUBLIC
THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE
NIGGERS REFORMED AT HAMBURG, S.C
ALL QUIET IN TOWN A REFORM VICTORY IS SURE GEN M.C.BUTLER

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TILDEN AND THE HAMBURG MASSACRE
CARTOON BY THOMAS NAST, 'HARPER'S WEEKLY' (1876), FROM THE GRANGER COLLECTION

In the atmosphere of political polarization that followed the Hamburg killings, Edgefield's Democrats decided that the time had arrived for an all-out effort to overcome the black electoral majority and recapture control of the state government. General Gary directed Democratic clubs throughout the state to organize themselves into well-armed and tightly organized militia units, and decreed that "every Democrat must feel honor bound to control the vote of at least one negro, by intimidation, purchase, keeping him away or as each individual may determine, how he may best accomplish it. . . . Never threaten a man individually," Gary counseled, "[for] if he deserves to be threatened, the necessities of the time require that he should die."

South Carolina's Democrats implemented Gary's "Edgefield Policy" with varying degrees of effectiveness in different areas of the state, but nowhere so brutally as in the vicinity of Edgefield itself. There the 1876 campaign was marked by two more massacres following the one at Hamburg, as well as by many isolated acts of terrorism against black Republicans, including the summary execution of a black state senator. In mid-September at least fifteen and possibly as many as one hundred blacks were shot to death in the swamplands near the Ellenton community. Writing to the Republican Governor of South Carolina six weeks before the election, Edgefield's black probate judge, H. N. Bouey, reported that "[a]ll is not quiet in our hellish county. Governor, our courage has not failed, but things look bad up here. . . ."

The Edgefield landowners' campaign of violence and fraud, which included an armed takover of the ballot boxes at Edgefield Courthouse on Election Day, produced a Democratic majority in the November 1876 elections far in excess of the number of white registered voters in the county. Statewide, the campaign had ended in a virtual dead heat between the Republican Governor and his moderate Democratic challenger, General Wade Hampton, and only by including the fraudulent Edgefield returns did the Democrats command a majority. A political standoff dragged on until April 1877, when the new Republican President of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes—having been installed in office by the House of Representatives over his Democratic opponent, Governor Samuel

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J. Tilden of New York—accepted Hampton's assurances that federal troops were no longer needed to protect South Carolina's blacks, and declared the end of Reconstruction. The Edgefield Policy had won out.

The federal government's credulousness at that crucial historical moment did have some factual basis. For despite the terrorist tactics and the racist ideology of his supporters in Edgefield County and elsewhere, Governor Hampton himself had consistently advocated a policy of moderation and fairness toward South Carolina's black population. "Not one single right enjoyed by the colored population shall be taken from them," he promised during the 1876 campaign. Such moderation was cited at the time by Northern Republican leaders as evidence that Reconstruction had done its work. And to be sure, black South Carolinians would continue to vote and to hold political office, though in steadily dwindling numbers, for another twenty years after 1876. The transition to nearly total disenfranchisement would not come overnight, and white political leaders both in South Carolina and in Washington had some reason to believe that it would not come at all.

But from "our hellish county" of Edgefield, where the white supremacist onslaught had begun, the full dimensions of the catastrophe that was befalling South Carolina's black majority were already clear. As he watched his county pass from the control of the black community back into the hands of the white ex-slaveholders, H. N. Bouey, the black former probate judge, wrote in May 1877 that he saw no alternative but to join the growing Liberian emigration movement. Edgefield's black laborers, Bouey wrote, now "have no chance to rise from beggars . . . [The whites] believe that my race have no more right to any of the profits of [our] labor than one of their mules." The former teacher predicted that "in five years from now the public schools will be closed on the negro. . . . [E]ducation makes unprofitable labor in the South. Hence our people must, and will, be kept ignorant." "I have become satisfied," Bouey concluded, "that the colored man has no future in America. I have manhood in me that I would sooner die than compromise."

THE WHITE LANDOWNERS' seizure of local government in Edgefield would prove permanent, and, for the black laborers of the county, disastrous. Farm laborers found their common pasturelands being fenced off, and their means of enforcing wage agreements consigned to the discretion of hostile white officials. Lien laws were revised to remove tenants' and laborers' security from creditors. Even more ominously, a succession of new labor contract laws during the 1880s provided that farm laborers could be imprisoned for leaving their employers.

From the campaign of 1876 until the present, Edgefield's blacks would never again succeed in electing a single public official of their own choosing, and, apart from a handful of accommodationist ministers, there would be no one in the years after 1876 to articulate their problems or record their struggles. But before disappearing from the historical record, the black people of Edgefield would be heard from one last time.

On Christmas Eve, 1881, some four to five thousand Edgefield blacks began a trek toward the Savannah River at Augusta, and, from there, by rail to a new beginning in Arkansas. This carefully organized mass emigation continued for a week, and, by its end on New Year's Eve, many farms in Edgefield had lost their entire labor force. A Charleston newspaper correspondent exclaimed that "there has been nothing like it since the days of the Pharoahs." The county's State Senator tried to reassure his white constituents that "the cause of the Exodus was the natural unrest and nomadic disposition of the negro." But the Charleston *News and Courier*'s correspondent reported the emigrants' complaints that "they cannot vote at the elections and if they do vote that their votes are not counted; that they have no representation in the government, and that their rights are in the keeping of a hostile political party." In addition, the emigrants described conditions of economic oppression and deepening impoverishment in Edgefield. "We are poorer now than when we began," they told *News and Courier*'s correspondent. "There is no help for us here . . . and so we have just determined to go somewhere else and take a new start."

IT WOULD FALL to another Edgefield politican to extend the drive for complete black disenfranchisement to the rest of South Carolina. The Edgefield agrarian leader Benjamin R. Tillman saw disenfranchisement as essential to guarantee the political ascendancy of the upstate white farmers whom he'd organized into a populist crusade in the late 1880s, and, as governor of South Carolina after 1890, Tillman campaigned for a new State Constitution to remove the threat of black political power once and for all.

The principal method of disenfranchisement which Tillman saw incorporated into his new constitution of 1895 was a system of literacy tests and property qualification which were expressly designed to exclude as many blacks and as few whites as possible. In addition, Tillman and his followers institutionalized the statewide white Democratic primary, through which all real electoral contests could be confined exclusively to whites operating with a closed one-party system free from the risk of federal interference.

In 1894 Tillman won election to the United States Senate, where he would expound his white supremacist views until his death twenty-four years later. In Washington, Tillman urged that the country follow the example of Edgefield and South Carolina in disenfranchising blacks. "[T]he State of South Carolina has disenfranchised all of the colored race that it could under the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth

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Amendments," he told the Senate in 1900. "We have done our level best, we have scratched our heads to find out how we could eliminate the last one of them, and we would have done it if we could . . . [W]e took the government away. We stuffed ballot boxes. We shot them. We are not ashamed of it."

BACK HOME in Edgefield, during Pitchfork Ben Tillman's reign as Governor and U.S. Senator, his affairs were entrusted to Corporal Thurmond's son, J. William Thurmond, who served both as Tillman's personal attorney and as Edgefield's political boss. Thurmond's personal loyalty to Tillman was such that he had once killed a Tillman opponent in a political quarrel. Pleading self-defense, he was acquitted of murder by an Edgefield jury and then promptly elected to be circuit prosecutor. Tillman would prove no less loyal to Thurmond: when Woodrow Wilson refused Tillman's request in 1913 to appoint Thurmond as U.S. Attorney for South Carolina because of his Edgefield murder indictment, Tillman pushed a bill through Congress to split South Carolina into two federal judicial districts so as to create a new U.S. Attorney slot for his Edgefield lieutenant. Wilson again demurred when Thurmond's name was resubmitted, but the President eventually gave in and Thurmond got his job.

It was during this phase of Tillman's career that Thurman began taking his nine-year-old son Strom along on his regular Sunday trips to visit the legendary agrarian leader at Tillman's farm near the Edgefield community of Trenton. "I remember the first time I saw him," Strom Thurmond recalled sixty years later. Tillman was "the only man I ever knew who could raise his voice to such a crescendo that it sounded like a wild animal. . . . He used a lot of profanities but really he didn't mean anything by them; he was a good man."

Strom Thurmond was just fifteen when Tillman died in 1918, but the whites-only political system of which Tillman had been the prime architect was still very much intact when Thurmond began his political ascent as Edgefield's youngest superintendent of education in 1928, and thereafter as State Senator and circuit judge. By the time Strom Thurmond sought and won the governorship of South Carolina in 1946, however, the first cracks were appearing in Ben Tillman's system. The U.S. Supreme Court had struck down the white primary in Texas in 1944, and South Carolina had been forced to respond by repealing all of its state laws dealing with primary elections so as to be able to claim that the whites-only Democratic primary was a purely private matter beyond the state's control. The 1946 "unofficial" primary which elected Thurmond Governor would be the last all-white statewide election in South Carolina.

In that final calm before the racial storm, Governor Thurmond cultivated a moderate and mildly progressive image. He supported increased educational spending and the upgrading of the state's black schools and colleges, ordered an attempt to prosecute whites guilty of lynching (a stand which Tillman, despite his racist views, had also taken as Governor fity years earlier), secured the repeal of South Carolina's poll tax, and replaced a much-abused gubernatorial pardon power with a modern parole and probation system. But it was not for his legislative initiatives that Thurmond's term as Governor was to be remembered.

In February 1948, President Truman announced a civil rights program that included federal legislation to outlaw lynching and poll taxes and adoption of a nationwide Fair Employment Practices Code. After a few weeks of hesitation, Thurmond rushed to take the leadership of a growing movement of opposition to the Truman initiatives throughout the white South. Soon he was describing Truman's proposals as a new Reconstruction. "Again the American people are being propagandized to believe that Southerners have been mistreating the Negroes in our midst, and that we are unfit for local self-government." As for the poll-tax proposal, Thurmond warned,

> If Congress can use this law to establish the power to deal with the right of the American people to vote, it can establish a form of Federal suffrage. . . . When this occurs, the states could lose their effective voice in the national legislative halls as surely as did the Southern states in Reconstruction days when our ballot boxes were surrounded by Federal soldiers.

The crisis grew even more acute a few weeks after Truman's announcement, when a federal appeals court ruled that South Carolina's white primary, "unofficial" or not, had to be opened to black voters. The state Democratic convention promptly voted to solve that problem by requiring all prospective voters to swear "that I understand, believe in and will support . . . the social, religious and educational separation of the races." The 1948 state Democratic convention also nominated Governor Thurmond as South Carolina's favorite-son candidate for President. The convention's loyalty oath to Jim Crow would be struck down by a federal judge just two months later, but by then Thurmond was in Philadelphia leading the Dixiecrat faction at the national Democratic convention. By August, Thurmond's Southern Democrats had bolted the national party, and the South Carolina Governor was running for President on the States' Rights ticket.

THURMOND INSISTS TODAY that his 1948 Presidential campaign was waged not on behalf of segregation but to preserve the constitutional principles of states' rights. And, to be sure, his campaign speeches of that year were mainly given over to the same sort of constitutional theorizing that has provided his rhetorical meat and drink ever since. Despite his apparently earnest insistence throughout the cam-

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paign that Truman's Fair Employment Practices Code had been lifted from a 1920 Soviet law drafted by Joseph Stalin, and an occasional rebel yell that "there's not enough troops in the Army to break down segregation and admit the Negro into our homes, our eating places, our swimming pools, and our theaters," most of his 1948 campaign pronouncements consisted of insipid expositions of states' rights constitutional doctrine. So while the Governor expounded constitutional dogma, it was left to supporters like the Charleston *News and Courier* to remind Thurmond's constituents that the real issue was nothing less than the future of white supremacy:

> Some of the men in public life, notably Governor J. Strom Thurmond, have spoken and acted. They are willing to risk their livelihood and their careers for principles they believe to be right. If they fail in their crusade, if negroes are given the deciding voice in electing officeholders in South Carolina, these men are finished politically. They are well aware of this, and yet they are not afraid to speak.

Thurmonds' message was just as clear to South Carolina's black leadership, which would never forget his Dixiecrat crusade. Two years later, the state's black leaders would bitterly oppose Thurmond's first bid for a Senate seat. Thurmond lost so narrowly that his opponent's support from the still miniscule black electorate may well have decided the outcome, and thus demonstrated the truth of Tillman's warning that even a small black vote could prove decisive.

THURMOND FINALLY reached the Senate in 1954, after waging the first and only successful write-in Senate campaign in U.S. history. His election came just a few months after the Supreme Court's *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision. Accordingly, the voting rights issue was overshadowed during Thurmond's early years in the Senate by the growing battle over school desegregation. In the first firestorm of resistance that spread through the South after *Brown*, Thurmond could be found assuring local white Citizens' Councils in South Carolina that "as long as we keep public sentiment strongly against integration in the schools, we will not have integration," and in Congress he drafted the "Declaration of Constitutional Principle," a segregationist manifesto which, after some toning down, eventually garnered the signatures of most of the Southern Senators and Congressmen.

But it was the federal government's first and most timid foray into the area of black voting rights that drew the freshman Senator into the national limelight. The 1957 Civil Rights Act had begun as a relatively wide-ranging civil rights initiative by the Eisenhower Administration, but Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson's mediation reduced it to a toothless voting rights measure by the time that it reached a vote in the Senate. At that point the Southern leadership in the Senate declared victory, correctly recognizing that the bill's remaining provisions, creating a U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and authorizing federal voting rights lawsuits, would have little or no impact on the South. But Thurmond could not be called off so easily. "Do not be deceived," he had earlier warned the Senate, "by the statements that the main purpose of this bill is to protect the voting rights of Negro citizens. The real purpose is to arm the federal courts with a vicious weapon to enforce race mixing." When the Southern leadership dropped its last resistance to what was left of the bill six weeks later, Thurmond broke ranks to launch a one-man filibuster, droning on for more than twenty-four hours to establish a Senate record that still stands. "No persons in my state are deprived of the right to vote," he insisted over and over.

AT THE TIME when Thurmond was making these statements, 34 percent of South Carolina's voting-age population, but less than 11 percent of its registered voters, were black. This 11 percent figure represented a very small minority bloc which Thurmond himself had been able to overcome in 1954. If blacks were to register and vote on an equal basis with whites, however, no segregationist politician's future would be secure.

On a local level, the extent both of disenfranchisement and of potential black voting strength were even greater. In Thurmond's native Edgefield County, for example, the first handful of blacks to register since the late 1800s had signed up just six years before the 1957 debate. (It had taken three trips to the courthouse and the presence of a lawyer from Columbia before anyone at the registration office could remember where the book was or whose job it was to register them.) At the time of Thurmond's filibuster, Edgefield's white minority still had 92.4 percent of the votes. And in neighboring McCormick County, not a single black was registered to vote in 1957 despite the fact that blacks comprised 61 percent of the population.

The McCormick County situation soon attracted the attention of the new Commission on Civil Rights, whose creation Thurmond had tried to prevent through his 1957 filibuster. In May 1960, some two years after South Carolina had first revealed the total absence of blacks from the county's voter rolls, Attorney General William P. Rogers sent four FBI agents to McCormick to have a look at the county's records. Local officials were outraged by Rogers's insinuation that McCormick's blacks were not permitted to register and vote, since they knew for a fact that one black man had signed up in August 1959—after the Civil Rights Commission's report—and three more had followed after that.

"This is just the sort of thing Senator Thurmond warned would happen under that civil rights legisla-

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tion," complained McCormick county attorney J. Fred Buzhardt (who would later gain a measure of fame as President Nixon's last White House Counsel), "people poking their noses into places where they have no business, making accusations without facts, stirring up controversy." Thurmond took to the Senate floor two days later to deny that blacks had been discriminated against in McCormick, and he called Rogers's insinuations to the contrary a "contemptible display of political demagoguery." The Civil Rights Commission later reported that shortly after Rogers's intervention, some forty-five blacks registered to vote in McCormick county, but that some of these new registrants lost their jobs in retaliation for having registered. As a result, the Commission said, only one black actually voted in the June 1960 primary, and none in the November general election.

WHETHER THE 1957 Civil Rights Act had been intended to be "a vicious weapon to enforce race mixing" or merely to dismantle the elaborate systems of disenfranchisement erected by Ben Tillman and his counterparts in the other Southern states, it turned out to have very little effect of either sort. Even after strengthening amendments had been passed as part of the 1960 and 1964 Civil Rights Acts (again over Thurmond's strenuous opposition), very few voting rights suits were ever filed under the act, and black voter registration did not increase appreciably throughout most of the South in the mid-1960s. Again, Thurmond's home county was a fairly typical example: in early 1965, 96.3 percent of Edgefield's white voting-age population were actually registered to vote, as opposed to only 17.3 percent of adult blacks.

But then came Selma, and, for once, Thurmond and his allies found themselves overwhelmed. In the aftermath of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dramatic march to Montgomery in March 1965, the Johnson Administration conceded the ineffectiveness of previous federal attempts to attack disenfranchisement, and proposed a new voting rights act based on two key provisions. The first abolished the literacy tests that had been the primary vehicle for black disenfranchisement throughout the South ever since Ben Tillman's time. And the second provision specified that in any jurisdiction that had both used literacy tests and experienced low voter participation, any future changes in voting procedures or laws would have to be "precleared" by the Justice Department or by a federal court in Washington to ensure that they did not discriminate against minority voters. This unusual remedy was designed to forestall whatever new discriminatory voting practices might be devised to replace the outlawed literacy tests—practices which might otherwise remain in effect for years until they could be successfully challenged in court, only to be replaced at that point by still newer forms of discrimination which would then have to be challenged all over again. By requiring that any future changes in voting laws or procedures be cleared in advance, either by a federal court or through a relatively simple administrative procedure in the Justice Department, the new voting rights proposal appeared to eliminate all possibility that black enfranchisement could be stymied or stalled any longer.

Once again, Thurmond took a leading role in marshaling Southern opposition. But the drama and bloodshed at Selma had transformed the political climate, and this time neither Congress nor the country was in any mood to listen to Thurmond's assurances, given at the Judiciary Committee hearings in April, that "there is no voting discrimination against anyone in South Carolina," and that the low registration rate of Southern blacks was due to "apathy" and "indifference." As the inevitability of defeat grew more apparent in early May, Thurmond took the Senate floor for a four-hour speech in which he denounced the Southern civil rights movement as "nothing more nor less than a war against society—in short, an insurrection." Later he lobbied for amendments to extend the bill's preclearance provisions to the whole country, a plan that would have swamped the Justice Department with such a flood of paperwork that its voting rights staff would have been unable to review much of anything. (Thurmond would revive this proposal during the 1970 and 1975 Voting Rights Act extension debates, and has been pushing it again as Judiciary Committee chairman since 1980.) Thurmond and his colleagues' efforts were cut off when the Senate invoked cloture on May 25, 1965, and the Voting Rights Act became law on August 6.

In the first years after passage of the Voting Rights Act, black voter registration surged forward throughout the South. In South Carolina, the proportion of blacks registered to vote nearly tripled between 1960 and 1970, and before long the newly registered black voters had begun electing black candidates to local offices: the state's eleven black elected officials in 1968 had by 1974 increased more than tenfold to 116, and had nearly doubled again by 1979.

BUT THERE HAVE BEEN gaps in this development of black political power. Although no fewer than twelve of South Carolina's forty-six counties have black majorities, the State Senate's forty-six members are elected under a complicated at-large system based on multi-county, multi-member districts, every one of which happens to have a white majority. Thanks to this ingenious arrangement, and to racial bloc voting by South Carolina's white population, not a single black candidate has ever succeeded in winning election to the Senate.

Acting under the Voting Rights Act, the Justice Department had consistently invalidated such multi-member election schemes in other states because they dilute black voting strength and thus eliminate the

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possibility of black representation. But a peculiar legal blunder by Attorney General Richard Kliendienst's Justice Department in June 1972 prevented an effective veto of South Carolina's Senate arrangement. What happened was that a federal court had ruled earlier that year that the Senate apportionment plan did not violate the Constitution, and when the plan was submitted to the Justice Department for preclearance, the Department announced that it would simply "defer" to the court's ruling rather than conduct its own evaluation of the plan under the Voting Rights Act. When another court later ruled that the Voting Rights Act *required* the Justice Department to make its own determination, the Department took another look and found that the plan did indeed discriminate against black voters. But by this time the Attorney General's 60-day time limit for filing objections under the Voting Rights Act had long since expired. So the Senate plan stayed in effect.

This odd sequence of events provoked speculation in South Carolina that the Justice Department's apparent fumble on the State Senate plan may actually have been an accommodation to Strom Thurmond. The South Carolina Senator, after all, had almost singlehandedly saved Richard Nixon's Presidential nomination in Miami Beach in 1968 against a last-minute challenge from Ronald Reagan, and in 1972 Thurmond operative Harry Dent occupied a key political post in the Nixon White House. But then-Assistant Attorney General David L. Norman, the Justice Department official responsible for the handling of the South Carolina Senate plan, says now that no political pressure was brought to bear on him, and Dent says he does not recall ever discussing the matter with the Justice Department. On the available evidence, then, it may just be a coincidence that the Senate in Strom Thurmond's home state has been permitted to remain the only all-white legislative body in the South.

In Thurmond's home county, the story is essentially the same. Although Edgefield's black majority has been eroded by generations of emigration, about 40 percent of the county's registered voters today are black, and blacks comprise voting majorities in two of the county's five districts. Despite this apparent power base, however, the virtually total exclusion of blacks from political power in Edgefield that began with the election of 1876 continues to this day.

The explanation is Edgefield's system of at-large elections for the county council and school board. Under an at-large system, every voter in the county is permitted to vote for every vacant seat. This procedure permits a racial majority to exclude a minority from any representation on the county council. And in Edgefield County, that is what the white majority has done.

This state of affairs led to a lawsuit in 1974 by a group of black voters led by Thomas C. McCain, a young black mathematics teacher who lives in the southern part of Edgefield County, not far from the old Tillman farm. McCain charged in his lawsuit that the Edgefield's at-large election system violated the Constitution because it effectively excluded black citizens from participating in the political life of the county. The case was heard by federal district Judge Robert F. Chapman, a conservative Thurmond nominee who took two days of testimony in the fall of 1975 and then waited four-and-a-half years to rule, apparently in the expectation that the county would voluntarily adopt a new election system. When the judge did rule, however, he agreed with the black plaintiffs that Edgefield's system of local government had worked to exclude black citizens from political participation.

EDGEFIELD VOTING RIGHTS RALLY, JUNE 1981
PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG GILMORE

"The Court's overall finding," Chapman wrote in summarizing his review of Edgefield's recent political history, "is that blacks were virtually totally excluded up to 1970, and since that time they have progressed to minimal tokenism." Although some impediments to black political participation had been removed prior to the lawsuit, Chapman wrote, "there is still a long history of racial discrimination in all areas of life," with "bloc voting by whites on a scale that this Court has never before witnessed. . . ." He noted that a black had been appointed to the county school board and subsequently permitted to run unopposed, but under these circumstances the judge concluded that this lone black representative "obviously serves as a token and at the pleasure of the white power structure." He

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pointed out that blacks had not only been excluded from representation on the county council, but had also been almost entirely excluded from service as precinct officials or poll workers, even in majority-black precincts. Employment of blacks in county jobs had been "negligible" until a few blacks were hired to fill low-paying jobs just before the trial of the voting rights lawsuit. The judge cited evidence that blacks had been excluded from county council appointments to local boards and commissions. He observed that Edgefield's blacks "have a much lower socio-economic status than do whites," with "smaller incomes, less education and fewer employment opportunities." And he described how, when desegregation changed the composition of the student body at Edgefield's Strom Thurmond High School from 100 percent white to 65 percent black in the early 1970s, the all-white county school board fought to retain "Confederate Rebel" and "Dixie" as the school's nickname and song, and went so far as to obtain a court order to prohibit protests by black students and parents.

Based on this picture of nearly total racial exclusion and white domination, Judge Chapman finally concluded that Edgefield's at-large election system violated the Constitution, and would have to be changed before the next election.

What would be changed, however, was not Edgefield's election system but Judge Chapman's ruling. For just five days after his order was announced, the United States Supreme Court ruled in an Alabama case, *City of Mobile* v. *Bolden*, that an at-large local election arrangement does not violate the Constitution even if it has the effect of ensuring that blacks will not be elected to political office, so long as the particular election system was not brought into existence for the *purpose* of racial discrimination. Since Edgefield's black voters had not proved that the county's at-large election system had been adopted as part of a conscious scheme to exclude blacks from office, Chapman withdrew his order in light of the *Mobile* decision, and Edgefield's county council is still at-large and all-white.

The voting rights bill now awaiting action by Senator Thurmond's Judiciary Committee includes a provision that prohibits election practices which have a discriminatory result, regardless of whether they can be proven to have been designed with discriminatory intent. This provision would restore the legal standard in voting rights cases to what it had been prior to the *Mobile* decision, and in Edgefield its effect would be to reinstate Judge Chapman's original ruling striking down the county's at-large system. The discriminatory-result provision would also almost certainly void the complicated multicounty districting scheme which has kept South Carolina's Senate all-white.

It is this provision which causes Thurmond to describe the pending legislation as "worse than the present law," and he has concentrated much of his fire on this proposed change. Although Thurmond can no longer count President Reagan as a supporter of his longstanding proposal to extend the Voting Rights Act's preclearance provisions to all fifty states (an idea which Reagan endorsed during the 1980 campaign but abandoned as unworkable last fall), the President now agrees with Thurmond on the desirability of excising the discriminatory-result test from the bill, and in recent weeks Attorney General William French Smith has been lobbying Republican Senators to do away with the provision. At his December press conference, the President appeared to misunderstand the discriminatory-result provision as requiring proportional racial representation, which the pending bill expressly rejects. But to Thurmond, as to Edgefield's black voters, the real meaning of the provision is unmistakable.

Shortly after their initial court victory was nullified by the *Mobile* decision, McCain and the other Edgefield plaintiffs discovered that the county had apparently violated the Voting Rights Act by failing to submit its at-large election plan to the Justice Department for preclearance back in 1966, the year that the system was first adopted. Initially the Justice Department had intended to back McCain's new lawsuit by filing a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the black voters' position. But last August, just before the case was to be heard, the Justice Department changed its mind, and the brief, which had apparently already been written and printed, was never filed. Thurmond's office admitted that the Judiciary Committee chairman had discussed the Edgefield case with the head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division before the Department decided to drop out of the lawsuit, but denied that Thurmond had applied any pressure. McCain's suit is still pending.

LATE LAST SPRING, not long before Thurmond's apparent intervention in Edgefield's voting rights dispute, a coalition of black groups called for a mass rally of Edgefield blacks at Strom Thurmond High School to show support for the Voting Rights Act extension. The week before the Edgefield rally, the county school board denied the demonstrators' request to meet at Strom Thurmond High, on the grounds that "any demonstration would disgrace the name of our senior Senator." It took a federal court order to change the board's decision.

The day after that court order, over a thousand people rallied at the high school and then marched four miles into the town of Edgefield, assembling again at the town square in front of the antebellum brick courthouse. As the marchers made their way down the highway toward town in the brilliant June sunshine, white people sat on their front porches and watched quietly. No one had ever seen anything like it. There hadn't been a march of black people in Edgefield since Christmas of 1881, at the start of the trek toward Arkansas.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Two of a Kind

The news this week is homosexuality—in American films. Two major Hollywood products center on it: *Personal Best* (females) and *Making Love* (males). In European films homosexuality has already moved from the environment of drama to the central action—from, say, the British *Victim* of 1961 to the relatively recent German *In a Year of 13 Moons* and *Taxi zum Klo*. In the U.S., aside from spoof and transvestite farce, homosexuality has moved from implication (e.g., *Rope* in 1948) to glimpses of naughtiness (*Advise and Consent* in 1962) to exploitative identification with degeneracy and crime (the recent *Cruising*). But these two new American films treat homosexual desire and activity as elements of life—of normal life, without quotation marks around the adjective. The people are people, not victims or case studies. Whatever the faults of these two films, and though they take care to avoid confronting the totality of prejudices on the subject, they show an intent to deal with homosexuality as something other than a problem or an illness. This intent—I can't think of any American film precedent—marks a turning point and gives these two pictures an importance beyond their intrinsic worth.

Personal Best
(Warner Brothers)

Making Love
(20th Century Fox)

Personal Best is, in fact, tedious. If it weren't for the lesbian affair, it would be just one more jock picture, this time about female jocks—not all that different from, or superior to, Susan Anton's *Goldengirl* (1980), which, as I recall, had a suggestion of lesbianism in it. *Personal Best* deals with the long competition among women athletes, beginning in 1976, who want to make the U.S. track and field team for the 1980 Olympics. Long it is: and since we know that they are finally not going to Moscow anyway, the suspense is not heightened.

Robert Towne, who wrote *The Last Detail* and *Chinatown*, wrote *Personal Best* and makes his producing/directing debut with it. The producer/director, more than the writer, is responsible for making the picture too long and too close. The length is not only in distension of story but distension of individual shots, often in slow motion, too. Towne holds these shots far past their narrative utility, evidently out of regard for their plastic beauty—a beauty which, I'd guess, is in the eye of only one beholder. As for proximity, Towne keeps pushing us up against faces, the way Burt Reynolds did in *Sharky's Machine*. I began to have childhood claustrophobia, as when I was being smothered in a relative's unwanted embrace. Chief among the pushed-at-us faces are those of Mariel Hemingway—beetle brows, icebreaker jaw, and all—and of Kenny Moore, the man who takes her away from her girl friend, who looks like the youngest mummy in screen history. Other faces are Patrice Donnelly, her lover and co-athlete, who at least has some rodent vivacity, and Scott Glenn, the lean coach who sleeps with both women and who is to this track team what Svengali was to sopranos.

Evidently Towne was out to investigate a world in which intense concentration on the body can lead to polymorphous sexuality; and to explore the effect that sexual relations between competitors can have on competition. But the themes are sketched, not realized. Towne is so proud of being in charge of the film and of his chance to be frank that he wallows in his control and frankness without achieving much. Besides, he seems to be slightly deaf: he doesn't hear that the twining of Hemingway's voice with Moore's is like a duet for musical saws.

Lesbian lovemaking, done here between Hemingway and Donnelly, is not new in American productions: Beryl Reid sucked Susannah York's nipple in Aldrich's *The Killing of Sister George* 'way back in 1968. I suppose that lesbian frankness is more advanced in our films than male lovemaking because the film industry is run by men; and, besides the secret discomforts that the sight of male love may stir in them, they know that the hetero males in the audience are much more prurient about female gays: they know that almost all hetero porn films contain at least one lesbian encounter. (Of course the European film industry is also run by men, but European verism of subject—in fiction, drama, and film—has always been ahead of the U.S.) Statistics are not available about the sexual preferences of American film tycoons—I almost said potentates—but even those who are gay would have been reluctant until now to oppose what they thought was audience concern and tolerance. Richard Burton could play an aging homosexual, which he did excellently in Stanley Donen's *Staircase* in 1969 (while Rex Harrison, as his friend, merely swished about), but the man was old and there was no physical contact. Even the "daring" *Cruising* dealt more in talk and atmosphere than in practice, and anyway it took place mostly amongst implied low-lifes.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Chariots of Fire. Two (real-life) runners on the British Olympic team, 1924. Well written, beautifully acted, exciting, finally sad.

My Dinner With André. Carefully rehearsed, seemingly impromptu table talk between a playwright and a director, about much more than the theater. Surprisingly fascinating.

Reds. Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton as John Reed and Louise Bryant. Plenty of faults (including some minor fabrication), but, most of the time, propelled with headlong drive.

Sisters, or The Balance of Happiness. Two Hamburg sisters and their differing loves for each other rendered into an exquisite film. Perfectly made, ultimately a touch ambiguous, like many good poems.

SK

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Now, apparently, the powers believe that there has been an audience change. *Making Love* shows us two young men—nonsleazy, noncriminal—kissing passionately on the mouth, then lying together naked. We don't see more than that of their sexual activity. I specify details and limits because it's as a social-cultural datum that the film is a milestone. It was written, in fairly limber dialogue, by Barry Sandler from a story by A. Scott Berg, and it was directed by Arthur Hiller with, for him, unusual reticence—except for one camera trip around a lamp while a women telephones next to it.

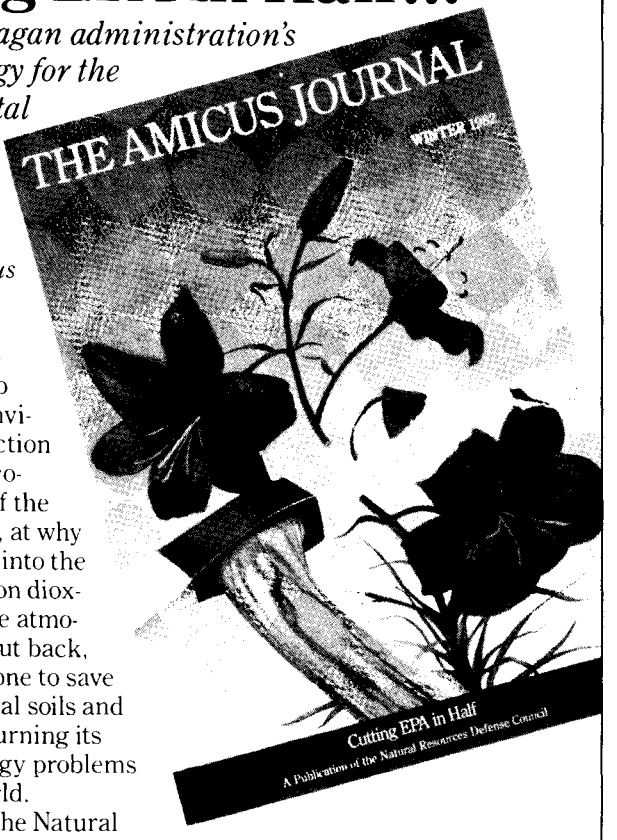
A young California doctor is happily married, it seems, to a woman active in her own career. But he's troubled by homosexual desires. He tries a couple of pickups around gay bars, but he can't go through with them: fear and good taste intervene. Then a young novelist, male, comes to his office for a physical exam, and soon after, they begin an affair. This breaks up the doctor's marriage. The novelist, blissfully homosexual, doesn't want a permanent liaison. The doctor moves to New York, where a job awaits, and follows his nature by setting up house with another man. We see him two years later, living truthfully, and visiting his ex-wife who has remarried and has a child.

Care has been taken to sanitize the script. The troubled husband and wife are childless. The male lovers are a doctor and a novelist, and the job the doctor gets in New York is at the Sloan-Kettering Institute. (No one who's working to cure cancer can be all bad, can he, even if he's homosexual?) I thought of Stanley Kramer's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, about a racially mixed marriage, where the black young man was a doctor, too, and an absolute world-beater. But after *Making Love* takes all precautions for respectability, it does try to deal with its people as people. (In fact its worst blunder is not with homosexuality but with character "texture." The doctor and wife are given an old friend who adores them, an English actress apparently modeled on Cathleen Nesbitt, who tells them about her pre-World War I romance with a poet who was a friend of Rupert Brooke. In this atrociously written role, Wendy Hiller gives the only poor performance I've seen from her.) Most of the material is good enough day-to-day stuff.

Kate Jackson, the wife, has a wiry face

Cutting EPA in Half...

That's the Reagan administration's budget strategy for the Environmental Protection Agency.



In the current issue, *The Amicus Journal* takes a close look at the Reagan administration's efforts to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency, at the economic collapse of the nuclear industry, at why federal research into the question of carbon dioxide buildup in the atmosphere is being cut back, at what can be done to save prime agricultural soils and why the U.S. is turning its back on the energy problems of the Third World.

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that makes her happiness and her agony blend in a kind of pettiness. Her doctor husband, Michael Ontkean, is better without being compelling; at least he convinces us that he knows what's happening to him, what he's risking, why he must risk it. The one attractive performance comes from Harry Hamlin as the novelist, which in a way hurts the picture because he enters a little late and eventually drops out. Funny coincidence: the doctor's eventual male mate in New York and his ex-wife's second husband seem to be played by the same actor—which isn't true, of course—a golden-haired dummy.

But the most interesting people connected with *Making Love* aren't on the screen—the ones who decided to risk making the picture, the producers Allen Adler and Daniel Melnick, the distributor 20th Century Fox. Some recognition is due, too, to the executive producer of *Personal Best*, David Geffen, and the distributor, Warner Brothers, though, for reasons given, I think their risk is somewhat less. All this is another way of saying that what's most interesting about both these films is not what they are but what their box-office fate will be. If they fail, nothing will be dependably proved: perhaps the public will just not have liked them as pictures, whatever their content. If they succeed, it *will* prove something: that frank homosexual content is no audience deterrent and may even be an attraction. Worth watching.

MICHAEL ULLMAN ON JAZZ

Recent Recordings

Pianist McCoy Tyner has said of his years with the John Coltrane quartet that he felt "sandwiched" between the powerful saxophone of Coltrane and the extravagant drumming of Elvin Jones. Nevertheless Tyner blossomed with the quartet. His churning, propulsive style, with its explosive left-hand chords and clearly articulated right-hand runs and tremolos, seemed both an extension of and a foil to Coltrane's own playing. Tyner left Coltrane in 1966 and spent several years trying to assemble a group with the esprit of the one he had quit. He never quite succeeded. (But he did produce several admirable recordings for Blue Note. *The Real McCoy* [Blue Note BST 84264], still available, includes several of Tyner's best compositions and performances: the gentle, flowing "Search for Peace" and his wild "Passion Dance.")

Tyner's career took off after he signed a contract with Milestone in 1972, an association he has recently ended. Milestone commemorated his decade on the label with *Reflections* (Milestone M-47062), an anthology of previously issued items that presents a confident Tyner in as many settings as possible, from solo to big band. It has a solo version of Coltrane's "Naima" that submerges the placid theme under waves of flamboyant decoration, includes "Afro Blue," arranged effectively for big band, and has several small band cuts with solos by Bobby Hutcherson, Sonny Fortune, and Azar Lawrence, the young Coltrane-influenced tenor saxophonist who plays an uncharacteristically relaxed "My One and Only Love." There are some unfortunate selections. "Above the Rainbow" is a short duet with Bobby Hutcherson that goes no place; Tyner's piano solo "Offering" is really an introduction to a piece by his group.

Reflections and *La Leyenda de la Hora* (CBS FC 37375) demonstrate what perplexes about the pianist. An enormously influential, accomplished, serious performer, he has not changed his basic style in the last decade. He has a unique rhythmic strength, as the Latin numbers of *La Leyenda* reveal, but occasionally he manages to sound both solid and frilly. He will set up a rhythmic pattern in his right hand and, with impressive speed and agility, transpose it up and down until it is swamped by another idea. Though the ideas keep coming, the basic context rarely changes. But perhaps this is unreasonable carping: Tyner is wholly convincing in what he does, even if he lacks Coltrane's ability to transform himself.

Johnny Hartman has such a good voice that he must be tempted to use it unintelligently. He is a barrel-chested baritone who in the 1960s recorded several albums for Impulse, including *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman* (Impulse A-40), which has helped to keep his name afloat. In the 1970s he recorded material for small labels that was vastly inferior to the songs on *Once in Every Life* (Bee Hive 7012), a recently released session of classic ballads. On one highlight of the album, "Nobody Home," Hartman is accompanied only by guitarist Al Gafa, who reveals a sensitivity I haven't heard from him before. Elsewhere Billy Taylor's trio, supplemented by trumpeter Joe Wilder, saxophonist Frank Wess, and Gafa, provide the support. Hartman sings with a smooth, rich tone, faithful pitch, and perfect enunciation.

Recent months have been good to jazz guitar fans. Jim Hall, "our paramount guitarist" according to *New Yorker* critic Whitney Balliett, has made *Circles* (Concord 161), a trio date with bassist Don Thompson and drummer Terry Clarke. An unassuming man, a glorious improviser, Hall is never flashy. He rarely raises his voice, but his melodies—whether his own compositions or his rearrangements of standards to blues—simply glow. One of Hall's best recordings, *Circles*, contains two of his compositions, both with a Latin tinge. One of these, "Down from Antigua," seems a series of beautifully contained, almost offhand phrases, stated first by the guitarist and then, with equal warmth, by bassist Thompson. The arrangement allows for a generous, relaxed dialogue between Hall and drummer Clarke, and for a heated Hall solo. There's also an innovative treatment of "I Can't Get Started" and a version of the Young-Heyman ballad "Love Letters" that is right as rain.

A 35-YEAR-OLD guitarist who has played with a host of big name jazz leaders (Gil Evans, Chico Hamilton, Miles Davis, Woody Herman), Joe Beck has not until recently made an album under what he considers to be perfect conditions. Beck believes in *Empathy* (Gryphon G2-911), a two-record set of duets with the wonderful bassist Red Mitchell. Beck tends to play chords where other guitarists rip off runs of notes: his harmonically appealing solos move in clearly arranged, blocklike steps. The album contains few long solos: Mitchell and Beck play together

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in the best sense of the word. Mitchell projects a big, focused sound, effortlessly sustained, and he plays melodies like a horn player. According to Beck, these performances were totally improvised: there's rarely a weak moment.

Before they split up, the Modern Jazz Quartet gave a triumphant concert in Avery Fisher Hall that was issued in part on Atlantic (*The Last Concert*, Atlantic SD2-909). The rest has just been released as *More from the Last Concert* (Atlantic SD-8806). These are not mere leftovers. "Blues in H" contains some of the timeless blues playing we came to expect of both Milt Jackson and John Lewis. *More* features works long associated with the MJQ: "The Jasmine Tree," "England's Carol," and "Tears from the Children." The group's arrangements were not always perfect; the long work, "In Memoriam," is not as consistently stimulating as the freer playing, and "Tears from the Children," Lewis's almost straight version of the affecting Prelude No. 8 from the first book of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, is marred by the constant tinkling of percussionist Connie Kay. The problem Lewis often faced was how to avoid making the composed sections of his pieces sound like mere introductions to the improvisation. Eliminating the improvisation, as he does on "Tears," was not necessarily the best solution.

Big band fans have had little to crow about these days. They should perhaps be advised that RCA has been quietly reissuing its complete recordings of swing masters Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and Tommy Dorsey. (RCA is up to the sixth double album of Goodman and there is more to come.) Those interested in more current music should hear a record by a New York band led by drummer Charli Persip and trumpeter Gerry LaFurn (*Superband*, Stash 209). Most contemporary big bands seem dedicated to proving how big they really are. (They should listen to the *sotto voce* choruses of Goodman's "Don't Be That Way.") Persip and LaFurn do some crashing around, but they have come up with a fresh arrangement of Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca" and several valuable originals as well. They feature Persip's drumming and the solos of top-flight New York musicians Jack Walrath, Frank Gordon, and Monty Waters. I imagine we'll be hearing more from this band (Stash Records, P.O. Box 390, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215).

On Translating Lyric Poetry

Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke a translation from the German and commentary by Robert Bly

(Harper & Row, 213 pp., $14.95, $7.95 paper)

Even poets of great renown—Rilke, for instance, or Stefan George—have sometimes attempted the impossible: to translate lyric poetry. When they seemed to succeed, they had produced not "translations," but rather poems in their own right, re-creations, perhaps, that issued from their immersion in poetic moods and dictions kindred to their own. In any stricter sense of the word, translations of lyric poems are impossible, but some translations—to vary a famous pronouncement and the word's meaning—are more impossible than others. Regrettably, the present volume belongs to that category.

To aggravate the predicament, Robert Bly shows a very insecure sense of aesthetic discrimination in selecting the poems for his Rilke anthology. "I have always loved these lines," he says of two lines written by Rilke that are, like the whole poem they conclude, a disaster. Yes, disasters do occur in Rilke's oeuvre; some of them are hilarious. Rilke's genius is often in excess of his taste. Yet there exist, of course, enough good, even surpassingly good, poems by him to make a voluminous anthology. Certainly, the choice too is a matter of taste, but *De gustibus non est disputandum* is the counsel of chaos. Taste preeminently deserves to be debated; its refinement is one of the chief objects of a literary education. At the end of it, a student of German should neither love the lines that are so dear to this translator:

> und in den abgebrochnen Tag der Teiche
> sinkt, wie auf Fischen stehend, mein Gewfühl

nor translate them thus:

> and in the ponds broken off from the sky
> my feeling sinks, as if standing on fishes.

And as Mr. Bly's rendering of this item is characteristic of the manner adopted throughout, it ought to be quoted in its entirety. "Progress" is the poem's title, or as the translator unobjectionably has chosen to call it, "Moving Forward." It comes from Rilke's uneven collection *Das Buch der Bilder (The Book of Pictures)* that consists of poems he wrote between 1902 and 1906. Here it is, if "it is" can be said of a translation that robs the original of its very few poetic qualities:

> The deep parts of my life pour onward,
> as if the river shores were opening out.
> It seems that things are more like me now,
> that I can see farther into paintings.
> I feel closer to what language can't reach.
> With my senses, as with birds, I climb
> into the windy heaven, out of the oak,
> and in the ponds broken off from the sky
> my feeling sinks as if standing on fishes.

Terrible stuff. Although the German is a trifle less disastrous, it is still a poetic catastrophe, largely due to the perpetual collisions of ill-fitted metaphors that precede the awful conclusion, a traffic jam of poetic diction that the translator, it is to be feared, takes for a sign of "unified sensibility" or, as he puts it in one place, "an amazing union of senses."

It is easy enough to point out those derailments. What is more difficult to show is the mushiness of sentiment that is at the center, in the exact spot where, with great poetry, a hard core of imaginative perception ought to be. Whenever possible, a critic should support his judgment by demonstration and argument. Well then: the first line of Mr. Bly's translation charitably conceals Rilke's evocation of sound. He has probably noticed the utterly inappropriate association of the depths of life with a

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rushing noise, and worse still, the *broadening* of the metaphorical river with the increase of the sound's volume. On the contrary, one should think, the noise would increase with a *narrowing* of the river banks. And how could anyone, in the midst of such turbulence, find the quietude needed for the profounder contemplation of pictures or images?

But there is worse to come. By rushing noisily along as if it were a broad river, the poet's "deep life" becomes the confidant of many nameless things while his senses reach out, like birds taking flight out of oak trees, for the windy skies until his feeling (singular) seeks a foothold on the fishes (plural) that presumably dart about in the broken-off day of the ponds (*"Teiche"* is plural because it has to rhyme with the singular German oak, *"Eiche"*)—and sinks. The feeling sinks into the ponds. The translator, as he tells us, has always been very fond of this unusual drowning accident and unfortunately says why:

> . . . the fish-image is a triumph, an amazing union of senses. It embodies exultation, humility, and danger in a single image. And we feel that the image doesn't say less than the truth.

This, of course, is arrant nonsense; and the interpretation is even sillier than the poem.

DRAWING OF RAINER MARIA RILKE BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The sinking feeling that is standing on fishes after having soared with the birds—an image combining exultation, humility, and danger? If slippery fishes are prone to sink—they never are—the feeling that is standing on them is indeed an endangered feeling. Who would not be at a loss to find in that absurd image a truth that is neither less nor more than itself? To sense a "triumph" in it, an "amazing union of senses"? Yet Mr. Bly, himself a poet of some achievement, has always been attracted to these lines, also because they show, he says, "Rilke's elaborate and thoroughgoing labor on sound." I have tried hard to detect what Mr. Bly can mean by this, and have failed.

The translator, understandably but problematically, has made no attempt to reproduce the rhymes nor, incomprehensibly, to suggest the rhythm. Yet he has maintained the division of lines as the only indication that the original was, or sometimes only purported to be, a poem—a poem that, he confesses, often gave him trouble, not because it was so bad but because of what he takes to be the subtle play on sound. And this, he says, "cannot be conveyed. . . . So the reader shouldn't believe he has the power here of the poems in German."

Mr. Bly's admission reaches further than he intends. It confirms that all lyric poetry frustrates any ambition to settle it securely in another language and also raises the fascinating problem, often ignored among the heirs of symbolism and, with their more audacious aesthetic utterances, even by the symbolists themselves: the problem of the relationship between the sound of a word and its meaning. The question is: could the verbal meaning go unremarked even at moments of the poet's most affectionate attentiveness to sound? Surely not. Although lyric poetry entertains the liveliest relations to musicality, it is not music. We only have to permit ourselves the impious experiment of replacing the rose in the opening verse of Blake's great poem—"Oh rose, thou art sick"—by "hose" in order to recognize that the total destruction of the marvelous fabric that results from such vandalism cannot possibly be accounted for by the shift from one consonant to another; no, it is due entirely to the violence done to our imaginative apprehension by the idiotic change of *meaning*. The imagination is being dragged away from beholding a lovely thing to a ludicrous triviality. Yet Rilke, in that poem, has done it all himself. For it is a ridiculous spectacle that the reader is made to watch when a feeling, descending from the skies, comes to stand on fishes and sinks. No degree of success in performing any subtle play on sound could mitigate the discomfort produced by the dizzying behavior of that feeling.

That much, then, about the role sound plays in relation to meaning. And so far as the "mere" meaning is concerned, that too sometimes turns out to be untranslatable, even if at first glance the procedure seems to require no more than a dictionary. There are, for instance, in Goethe's *"Ruh"* poem, the birds asleep *"im Walde"* that rhymes with *"balde"*; the longer form of *bald* (soon) is used here not merely for the sake of the rhyme but, more significantly, to heighten the ominousness of the promise that "you too will be at rest soon"—perhaps forever.

But it is not only the *balde*, the poetically extended form of the adverb, and not only the delightfully natural rhyming that cannot be rendered in any other language: *Wald* too refuses to recognize itself in its dictionary translations of "wood" or "forest"; and this has been so ever since German Romantic poetry took lyrical possession of the

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German woods. Could the simple question with which the best known of Eichendorff's nature poems begins—who was the architect of *"du schöner Wald"* up there?—be adequately asked in English by our employing "beautiful forest" or "lovely woods," the entirely correct equivalents of *Wald*? It couldn't. The response that *Wald* calls forth in the romantically conditioned German sensibility cannot possibly be evoked by forests or woods. These belong rather to the timber industry or schools of forestry.

WHAT HAS BEEN said here about meaning and sound in poetry ought perhaps be accompanied by apologies to Mr. Bly, who, in his devotion to sound, does not appear to go to extremes. Still, anyone who is prepared to present as English sonnets (Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*) verbal constructions that are innocent of the rhyming patterns proper to this time-honored poetic form, should not make much of the importance of sound in poetry. The absence of rhyme turns the emptily maintained order of required lines into an embarrassed concession. For the "subtle play on sound" rhymed poetry shows in the art of creating that harmony of acoustic affect and meaning that resides in rhyme. For rhyme is not, nor should it ever be, a mere external ornament that might be removed without fatally wounding the very body of the poem. When the rhyme is successful, it is the happiest reconciliation between the individual expression of the poet and an objective rule. It announces the arrival of peace, however temporary, in a war that threatens to be never-ending: the conflict between the anarchic tendencies of subjectivity and the need for order; and because the order is embedded in language, in a definite language, rhyme can never be transferred from one idiom to the next without, in most cases, sounding forced and thus losing its raison d'être. On the other hand, by ignoring the rhyme of a successfully rhymed poem, the translator jettisons something that is of the poem's essence; doing it, he is likely to produce a crib in place of a work of art. This is inescapably the case when the scheme of rhyming is as firmly grounded in the tradition of poetry as it is with the sonnet. *Sonnets to Orpheus*? This translated Orpheus has been imprisoned in the underworld and hardly an echo of his song reaches to surface of the earth.

Of course, rhymes are absent not only from Mr. Bly's Rilke, but also from most of what is about to become a contradiction in terms: modern poetry. And this cannot be otherwise in an epoch that is at the mercy of a deep discord between soul and world, between within and without. Our existence appears to be determined by that pre-established absurdity that has slowly but irresistibly moved in ever since the Leibnitzean pre-established harmony bowed out of the human universe, a departure that culminated in Nietzsche's pronouncing the death of God and that spread the epidemic malaise, the infection of the age: the pervasive sense of a world without rhyme or reason. Can anything rhyme in such a world? Can harmonies be sounded by its music? Is it a praiseworthy world? Clearly, it is not. But Rilke, in a state of poetic ecstasy, believes that the secret of alchemy has been entrusted to him: that he is able to transmute the base material of this world into the gold of Orpheus's song, the song of praise. But what is being praised is the song itself, the poem that has assumed the place of the world: *"Gesang ist Dasein."* It is praise that is itself its sole object. It is magically intransitive. This is the meaning of the magnificent first strophe of the seventh sonnet (seven—a magical number):

> Rühmen, das ists! Ein zum Rühmen Bestellter,
> ging er hervor wie das Erz aus des Steins
> Schweigen. Sein Herz, o vergängliche Kelter
> eines den Menschen unendlichen Weins.

In trying to say in English what in German is superb verse and rhyming, the translator turns on the full flow of his prosiness:

> To praise is the whole thing! A man who can praise
> comes towards us like ore out of the silences
> of rock. His heart, that dies, presses out
> for others a wine that is fresh forever.

Need it be said that the "man who can praise" is not just a man? It is Orpheus—according to the legend the son of Apollo and the muse Clio, a demigod—

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who is divinely appointed, according to Rilke, to sing the songs of praise; nor is his praise "the whole thing," but a grandiosely simple "it," itself; and by being itself, it is the sole purpose of the universe. Also, to prove the magical power that prevents the dust rising from the world of prose to coarsen the pure voice of the singer (second strophe), the song *must* be intoned as rhymed poetry, or else not be sung at all. For the *Sonnets to Orpheus* come immediately after, almost simultaneous with the last of the *Duino Elegies*, the dominant theme of which is the incorrigible dissonance ruling the relationship between man's mind and the "real reality," the reality of the Duino Angel. Therefore, the *Elegies* are the only major poetic work of Rilke's that knows of no rhyme—and this with a poet whose virtuosity in rhyming had almost turned compulsive: a punster once called him Rhymer Maria Rilke. But, in contrast to the *Elegies*, the jubilant overcoming of the Duino depression of the spirit by the discovery that the whole of existence rested upon Orpheus's "yea-singing," had to be celebrated in poems that rhyme, and do so in even that strictest rhyming sequence demanded by the form of the sonnet.

BUT IT IS NOT only the shortcomings of the translation that renders this anthology questionable. The translator's interpretative introductions to the individual sections of the book are also inadequate, and this is due not to the limited space at his disposal but to his limited understanding of the drama played out in Rilke's development. The importance of this drama lies not so much in the changing perceptions of this one poet as in the spiritual character of the age, in which he struggled to survive as an artist by defeating its formidable assaults on the spirit of poetry. For the age was, and is, the age of prose in Hegel's sense: an age in which the prosaic has "pressed its stamp" on everything by invading the whole area of intellectual comprehension. In such an epoch, poetry, if it is to assert itself, will have to overtax its strength by assuming, as Hegel puts it, the task of thoroughly dissolving, melting down, and then reshaping the material offered by the prosaic world—in the end perhaps language itself. Small wonder, Hegel adds, that "poetry will find itself involved in manifold difficulties."

COMING:

Theodore Draper on the Vietnam War according to Norman Podhoretz.

FOR RILKE the first and foremost of these difficulties was the loss of confidence in any possible harmonious relationship between his inner state and the given, the external, world; that is, between, on the one hand, his perceptions, thoughts, feelings, passions, poetic intuitions, and, on the other hand, the "objectivities" that might accommodate or even embody them by way of actions, images, constellations, landscapes, loves. This would be the correspondence that Goethe's poetry, for instance, so assuredly proves, and which T. S. Eliot, more problematically, means when he speaks of the "objective correlative" to the emotions.

As late as 1910, in retrospect, Rilke makes his—not entirely fictitious—young poet fill *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* with anxious observations of the unhappy condition, which brought about the "revolution" of *Neue Gedichte* (*New Poems*). These implicitly disavow what Rilke had written before and make the utopian attempt to eradicate the imbalance in the most drastic manner: by abolishing the subject, the "I" and its subjectivity. From now on his life as a poet was to consist of nothing but looking at things so selflessly and intensely that finally they would yield the secret of their innermost nature and thus become "objective," free of any subjective-idiosyncratic distortion: a panther in its cage, the wind of the nocturnal sea, a fig tree growing on a rocky height of Capri, a blue or pink hydrangea. With extraordinary devotion and virtuosity, Rilke sought to carry out a poetic program that afterward, in 1908, he enunciated in his *Requiem* for Wolf Count Kalckreuth, who was intent on writing poetry and might have become a poet had he not killed himself because of an unhappy love. This desperate young man had acted so desperately, the *Requiem* says, because he was not yet poet enough to have learned how the humanly unbearable able transcends itself. Instead of using language in order to say, like a patient, "where it hurts," the poet should lose himself in words, and relentlessly transform himself into them, just as the masons of medieval cathedrals became one with the stone's equanimity.

Mr. Bly, in his introduction to *New Poems*, does not show any comprehension of the terrible war between within and without that led to this determined if chimerical abnegation of anything subjective. He calls these poems simply "seeing poems." Certainly; and he is also right in saying that it was Rodin, the sculptor, who admonished and inspired his onetime secretary to use his eyes more consciously. But what is the difference between the "seeing" of *New Poems* and, for instance, Goethe's, that notorious seer? Goethe believed in the spontaneously exercised power of human eyes, *his* eyes, to see what man is *meant* to see, whereas Rilke, in this phase of his life, pursued the unreachable goal of an "absolute" sight by eliminating the "his" from his seeing. At that time he could not have said what Plotinus wrote and Goethe turned into verse: that our eyes would not be able to see the sun if they did not partake of the sun's very essence. If very soon Rilke came to fear—a fear he expressed in the remarkable poem *Wendung* ("Turning-Point") of 1904—that, far from setting them free of his subjectivity, he had, on the contrary, done violence to the things of his "thing-poems" (a better-fitting designation of *Neue Gedichte* than "seeing poems"),this was in truth the violence he had done to his own self.

IF NEUE GEDICHTE tried to resolve the intolerable tension between the alienated self and the things of the external world by making the self vanish and giving all power to the things, the subsequent *Duino Elegies* reversed the procedure. The self now discovered its true vocation: to liberate "the things" from their offending otherness and disembody them in the self's pure inwardness. "Nowhere will be world but within," proclaims the Seventh Elegy; and the seventh of the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, written at the same time, means the same with its "*Gesang ist Dasein*"—"Song is existence": true being is only in the singer's inner vision that reaches us as poetry. Even the often irritating eccentricities of the sonnets refer to this transformation, and do so on the very edge of what language, in its sensuous-

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ness, can say about the invisible inwardness:

> Da stieg ein Baum. O reine
> Übersteigung!
> O Orpheus singt! O holer Baum im
> Ohr!

The tree of which Orpheus sings is transmuted in and through his song, rising now beyond itself into the transcendence of the invisible. Language, alas, cannot follow into such rarefied heights and comes down with the jarring, not to say, tickly, image of a tree inside the ear. It hardly succeeds in conveying the metamorphosis of the tree into Orphic music, the pure sound of inwardness, but this is what the poet has commissioned the awkward image to accomplish. It is an obtuse translation in which *"O reine Übersteigung"* becomes "What a pure growing!" But then, it is impossible to translate lyric poetry. Is this, perhaps, reason enough to drop the case against the translator? Unless the offense is in attempting so naively the impossible.

ERICH HELLER

Erich Heller, Avalon Professor Emeritus of the Humanities at Northwestern University, is the author of *The Artist's Journey Into the Interior* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Franz Kafka* (Viking).

THE SHADOW OF TERRORISM

The Safety Net
by Heinrich Böll
translated from the German by Leila Vennewitz

(Knopf, 384 pp., $13.95)

Heinrich Böll's story of life under the shadow of terrorism proves to be a novel about the way we live now, or to be more precise, about the way they live now in West Germany. Revolutionary terrorism, of course, has been a disturbing presence in the political landscape for nearly two centuries, and long before the current flurry of popular novels on the subject, it was the focus of remarkable works of fiction like Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* (1871), Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907), and Andrei Bely's *Petersburg* (1916). But these older novels, however they might seek to penetrate the psychology of the terrorist, tended to view him as a menace different from ordinary humanity that had infiltrated society, a kind of microbe on the body politic—or, in the words describing the murderous professor which conclude *The Secret Agent*, something "unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men."

It is highly questionable whether terrorism between Conrad's time and ours has demonstrated any greater claim to be an effective means for the overthrow of the established order, but it tends to figure differently now in our imaginations because of the intervention of the media and the possibilities afforded by the new technology of destruction. The terrorists in our midst are no longer "unsuspected and deadly" but, often, grim celebrities scrutinized in magazine and television profiles. Conrad might have loved to write about a character like the Latin-American terrorist Carlos, but would have been puzzled by the fact that this international killer had a face familiar to millions from the pages of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

Terrorism is thus normalized as a fact of social existence by its assimilation into the celebrity system, and at the same time many have a growing sense—one hopes, mistakenly—that there is no real defense against the terrorist because of the subtle technological instruments at his disposal. As we know from the failed attempt, a hand-held rocket launcher fired from a hotel window could in principle shoot down an airliner; bombs can be contrived to go off with a change of altitude or temperature; an innocent and modest-sized object—in *The Safety Net* it is a bicycle—can be packed with explosive materials sufficient to wreak havoc in a large crowd. Terrorism, then, is often perceived in the West these days not as a dangerous disease which might possibly be avoided by stringent political hygiene, but as a permanent, established symptom of our malaise and our impotence, a symptom the patient is learning to live with willy-nilly. It is on this premise that Heinrich Böll has written his new novel.

The Safety Net is comprised of a series of monologues narrated in the third person reflecting the experience of Fritz Tolm, owner of a newspaper chain and newly elected president of a manufacturers' association; various members of his extended family; one of his police guards, as well as the chief of the security forces protecting him; a neighbor of Tolm's daughter who, because of the presence next door of suspicious security people, has been caught with her lover and thrown out by her husband. As we move from one narrated monologue to the next, there are striking or piquant differences in tone and mentality, and all this is happily mirrored in Leila Vennewitz's supple, lively translation.

Tolm and his family are especially inviting targets for terrorists not only

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because he is a prominent capitalist but also because Veronica, his son's ex-wife, is now living somewhere in the underground with Beverloh, a terrorist mastermind whom the Tolms had known as an appealing child in their small town near Cologne. The Tolms' son Rolf, who had actually served time for torching a car, has since abandoned political activism and now supports himself by handicraft; he lives with a new woman, with whom he has had a second son, named Holger after a terrorist "martyr," as was his first son, who is being raised in the underground by Veronica, perhaps at a P.L.O. camp in the Middle East. There are more complications of plot and relation than this huddled summary can suggest, the principal one being an affair between the aforementioned police guard and the Tolm daughter, who is unhappily married to a crass young industrialist.

THE 'SAFETY NET' cast around all the Tolms is, quite simply, the translation into an objective system of an acute, and possibly justified, paranoia. I am not competent to judge whether measures as extreme as those depicted here are actually adopted today in Germany and Italy to protect the captains of industry and their families; but in any case, what the novel clearly gives us is a realism of ultimate possibility, showing things not as they necessarily are but as in principle they could become. The Tolms, who have risen from humble origins to become the residents of what was once the local count's manor, live in an atmosphere of comprehensive, unrelenting surveillance. They cannot step out the door without an entourage of plainclothesmen armed with machine pistols; their granddaughter has to be withdrawn from school because the layout of the school building and grounds presents too many security problems; they are forbidden to sit on their own terrace because it is deemed too exposed; not only all their phone calls but even all their intimate conversations are monitored by electronic devices on the chance that one of them might inadvertently let slip some clue that could be useful to the security people.

The police surveillance, moreover, is compounded by the unofficial surveillance of the media—the very media, of course, that are the source of the Tolm wealth. Reporters and photographers watch every move the Tolms make, every eddy and ripple in their various marital relations. It is hardly surprising that they should feel more like prisoners than people of privilege, or that the fatalistic Fritz Tolm should fantasize one end for himself in which terrorists and the media take successive hands in staging the catastrophe. He imagines being murdered in a wheelchair he fears he may soon have to use (he suffers from arthritis) and tumbling down the stairs in crude imitation of the famous scene from the film *Potemkin*:

> Stairs, perambulators; stairs, wheelchair—and no doubt the cameraman would swear and say: 'For God's sake, why does the staircase have only eleven steps—this take's too short!'—and perhaps, in order to extend the take, he would send the bloodstained wheelchair careening down still more stairs.

The bleak idea recurring in the thought and speech of Fritz Tolm and mirrored by other characters is that, given the endlessly ingenious means the terrorists can employ against their all-too-visible targets, the most elaborate countermeasures will in the end be futile. "There is no security," Tolm tells his wife,

> —computers, rockets, rocketlike artificial birds, psychomanipulations, remote psychoterrorism—so we might as well resign ourselves to the loneliness of extreme, luxurious imprisonment.

He even entertains a fantasy that his elder grandson, Holger I, will return to him from the underground, diabolically programmed to kill his grandfather, and though this does not actually happen in the novel, it proves to have, like his other fantasies, a certain oblique connection with the truth.

The catchphrase, "chaos, disintegration all around," runs through the narrated monologues of several different characters, and Böll makes clear that the reference is not only to terrorism but to terrorism as one element in a larger breakdown of social coherence. In a voracious search for energy sources, the whole surrounding countryside is being torn up to get at the coal that lies beneath the surface of the ground, and the structures of religion (in this region, Catholicism) and local community, the very sense of connection with the past, are being destroyed in that convulsion of high-technology industrialism:

> Gigantic dredges were on the march, mechanical shovels amiably-pitilessly-innocently-inexorably devoured the forest, swallowing the earth, spitting it out again at a great distance, exhumed the dead (reverently, ever so reverently), tearing down churches and villages and castles. . . .

The Safety Net is pervaded by a profound nostalgia, although it is Böll's great virtue here that he does not sentimentalize the past; he suggests only that we cannot dispense with it as the revolutionaries and the technological profiteers, in their complementary ways, would have us do. The aging Tolm and Käthe, his wife of thirty-five years, are deeply attached to their own origins, but their flashbacks to childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood do not soften the remembered contours of physical hardship, frustration, local jealousies, Church-induced hypocrisies and guilt. The past was far from utopian, and it of course included the twelve most ghastly years of German history, but it did sustain a humanly necessary sense of community—among neighbors, co-religionists, members of the extended family, and between generations.

BY CONTRAST, the essential trait of contemporary Germany as Böll conceives it is divisiveness. We are made keenly aware of the powerful momentum of class distinctions beyond the traditional and perhaps once cohesive society in which they originated. There is also a sense of vehement ideological divisions within the society unlike anything we have known in 20th-century America, including the turbulent 1960s. The terrorists are the most extreme manifestation of a general drive toward the denial of connection. Kinship and love must be allowed to mean nothing; Tolm can readily and realistically imagine his own grandson raised without feeling as a kind of human bomb directed to the destruction of his grandfather. That bizarrely duplicated name Holger is said at one point to mean "island dweller with spear," and it is, presumably, to such a state of hostile isolation that the new order of terrorism would reduce every human being. The terrorists are, to borrow a phrase Leslie Fiedler once used for a rather different generation of rebellious youth, the "new mutants" who threaten the end of all traditional bonds and emotions: "What frightened him was that unearthly alien quality in their

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thoughts and deeds. It wasn't coldness—it was a state of being alien. . . ."

The other great strength of *The Safety Net* is that its unsentimental nostalgia is accompanied by a persuasive novelistic representation of the old-fashioned virtue of love. We see it exercised in several different ways among the two generations of Tolms, from the quiet love of the old couple to passion in the young, to parental and even filial love. The working out of this persistence of love amidst divisiveness in the denouement is somewhat problematic because rather too much is made to happen in the space of 48 hours and thirty or so pages, including a suicide, the apprehension and violent death of a principal terrorist, the reappearance of the missing grandson, the return (separately from the preceding event) of the prodigal daughter-in-law, and a dramatic act of arson. All this is managed with enough technical skill to rivet one's attention, but not without straining one's belief. In any case, what is most important about the final movement of the novel is the reconstitution in Rolf's two-room cottage of a community and of a family, his small haven, with its rough artisan's simplicity, becoming a kind of return to the warmth of the past for the main characters.

In the end, the tight meshes of the safety net cannot be pulled away; they are needed because the threat is still there—if not the specific threat that has been hovering ominously over the Tolms from the beginning of the novel, then some similar threat from another direction. But life, Böll wants to say, has to be more than the sensation of the net's reticulations, more than an endless naked shivering before telescopic lenses and electronic ears. There has to be some sustaining sense, even within the net, of a human community worth saving. Despite the flaws of the conclusion, Böll has managed through the characters etched in these monologues to evoke something of the ground of fellow feeling out of which community arises. The result is a novel that not only catches the scariness of living in a society lethally divided against itself but also provides a small intimation of how the perennial seeds of hope continue to grow in our climate of disaster.

ROBERT ALTER

Robert Alter is professor of comparative literature at the University of California at Berkeley, and most recently the author of *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books).

FROM COURTIER TO BIOGRAPHER

Clare Boothe Luce
by Wilfrid Sheed

(Dutton, 183 pp., $12.95)

Surely this is one of the oddest of biographies—adoring throughout, yet honest in many respects, witty, brilliant, immensely readable but at times as limply boring as only a fan's book can be. Wilfrid Sheed on Clare Boothe Luce, an odd couple: the talented and very bright Catholic novelist (man of letters, really) giving us the last word on one of America's monolithic personalities. The subject matter itself appears quirky, and those who know Sheed's work, his liberal bent, his connection via Sheed and Ward (his parents' publishing house) to the vital intellectual aristocracy within the Catholic Church, may feel bewildered, even a bit betrayed—as though we were to find out that a dear friend raised prize pullets on weekends, unbeknownst all these years.

It is indeed a strange story that has as much to do with Sheed, the biographer, as with Clare Luce. In 1949 Wilfrid Sheed, age 18, spent the summer at the Luce's sumptuous house in Ridgefield, Connecticut, reading, watching the Dodgers, eating shrimp and steak, being charmed by Clare, who seems genuinely to have wanted him around—though Sheed has never figured out her motives. The biography has this extraordinary novelistic beginning: beguiling young man with leg brace (Sheed had had polio) is taken in by beautiful worldly woman, a recent convert to Catholicism, who has withdrawn from public life. They live an idyll—bright instructive days, therapeutic swims, jigsaw puzzles (specially manufactured with the CBL logo hidden in each one) for the quiet evenings. Clare is absolutely gracious, a breezy but real lady at all times. This elevated chumminess is played out against another world of stuffy dinner parties with important and powerful people and the Big Think of Lucedom. For there was Harry, home each night and on weekends, a gruff consort with an empire in his briefcase.

It is a privileged way for a biographer to know his subjects: the Luces were his Luces before he quite realized that they were the world's. The very best of *Clare Boothe Luce* is in the play of Sheed's mind as he goes back to real life and is made to account for his unlikely summer in Wonderland.

"You went to stay with *whom*?" his best friend asks. This book may be read as an answer to that incredulous question, a long-deferred and thoughtful reply that shows off Sheed as an astute cultural historian, a subtle delineator of character, and a loyal friend. The worst of *Clare Boothe Luce* must also be attributed to that boyish introduction to glamour and power, which at times lends the biography a sappy manner—an excess of delicious tidbits and chatty detail—like memoirs of the royal family penned by nannies or butlers.

She was—she is—spectacular. Clare,

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as Wilfrid Sheed calls her, did have a dramatic life, the stuff of grand American fiction (Dreiser, Wharton), an ascent to wealth and prominence filled with trials and reversals, the golden future realized and turned to dross. Born to Anna Clare Snyder, a former chorus girl, and William Boothe, a ne'er-do-well fiddler, Clare's beginnings were humble indeed. Her father faded from the picture early on and left the home front to her comically ambitious mother, who waged a one-woman battle against poverty and insignificance from a flat on Columbus Avenue. Their son, David, never quite caught on to the rules of the game, but Clare, pretty and smart, was to score beyond her mother's most romantic dreams.

I will not give the machinations of the plot away. Sheed handles the melodrama with humor and grace—the mother's alliance with a good-hearted wealthy Jew, her marriage to a respectable doctor; Clare's introduction to society through the maneuvering of transatlantic deck chairs (Mrs. Augustus Belmont, if you please, was on that crossing), wangled invitations; finally, the girl's marriage to George Brokaw, a rich boy who sounds like one of the nastier types in Fitzgerald's *Basil* stories. There followed years of being snubbed by dullards while she read and nurtured the kind of hard private intelligence that overlooked women often gain. The first act curtain comes down on a glossy set in River House: Clare, triumphantly divorced, with maids, her beloved daughter Ann, and a dandy settlement of $26,000 a year. Not hard to begin again, but Sheed does convince us that she'd paid her dues.

Most readers do not know the early Clare Luce and the story is fascinating, all the juicy details as well as the heroic effort of this rags to riches tale. At this time there was no public Clare, just a beautiful divorcée with lots of style and guts, clever enough to settle herself into a smallish job at *Vanity Fair*, the chicest magazine of the era, and work her way right up to editor-in-chief. She was learning more sophisticated plays every step of the way and just plain learning, which in itself seems admirable. Her taste for quality goods led her to prestigious men: there was an enduring and educational alliance with Bernard Baruch, advisor to Presidents. One feels, reading *Clare Boothe Luce*, that Sheed is right—it's all remarkable and yes, we can see the career woman emerge working twice as hard as most successful men, looking cool and gorgeous to boot. The habit of striving is a hard one to stop. When the swank *Vanity Fair* went under in the Depression there was Henry Luce to marry and Broadway to conquer with *The Women*.

And so Clare Boothe Brokaw moved on, as her biographer sees clearly, from one world to another; each stage was grander than the last, and the world left behind perceived as somewhat parochial and shallow, though it had been fun. I see her stepping up to Henry Luce's America and when that gave out (not America but Luce as the marriage cooled), to God. That's where Wilfrid Sheed came in, an appealing Catholic boy, the real article born and bred, visiting the celebrated convert.

We can believe that she was absolutely fine at home, but Sheed knows he cannot sway his audience with this rendering of Clare in semi-retirement. Before and after her short "retreat" in Ridgefield she was one of the most visible figures of the day, photographed as a society woman, editor, playwright, war correspondent, Congresswoman, Ambassador to Italy, wife of Henry Luce. She was the woman who thought up *Life* magazine. One thesis that Sheed makes much of is that there were two Clares: his thoughtful hostess with her everyday manner, her plain dealings with the servants, a straightforward speech, and at the same time another Clare—formal, actressy, "autodidact of the dinner table" with an affected voice, a grande dame who could outwit the guests. That seems predictable: and thank God she could kick off her shoes, that she still had small talk, that every conversation did not sound like an editorial meeting at Time-Life.

CLARE BOOTHE LUCE BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The two Clares are easy enough to buy but there is only one Mrs. Luce, and that persona cannot be knocked down into conveniently unpuzzling pieces. By her own admission she seems to have lost her talent when she found her faith. Sheed traces her decline into a banality which led to the film script of *Come to the Stable* (nuns, gamblers, goodness at the finish line), but he does not distinguish between this meaningless failure of a B movie and the great flaw in *Europe in the Spring*, a supposedly serious book on foreign policy, written at the outbreak of World War II, which is spoiled by the intrusion of Republican hoopla. At Harry's suggestion, a strong editorial voice to have around the

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house, she tied up her observations of Europe on the brink with a tribute to Wendell Wilkie's *One World* doctrine. "When Clare says now she wishes she'd never got into politics at all, it could be this descent into Lucification that she is talking about."

Could be. Lucification: it played a great part in the later career and it's not to be dismissed by an amusing coinage. "The irony is that she was going places women didn't usually go, thus earning the applause of protofeminists, but she was doing it as Luce's woman," Wilfrid Sheed tells us, and Clare herself, "the sometime New Dealer," says, "You married Harry, you became a Republican." The party allegiance came along with Harry's Chinese vases and the solemn responsibilities of *Life*. How odd for this woman who had fought her way to a respectable independence of mind to succumb so easily, to become the ultimate corporate wife. It is finally the tone of arch absolution that is most worrisome in this biography. The personal life, of course, we should never call into account—the beautiful woman forced to make her way, who lost her only daughter in a tragic accident. The end of that story is repentance and consolation. But what of the public life which has the verisimilitude of the photo essay she invented? Mrs. Luce's politics can't be gathered into a rollicking *Ragtime* survey of history as entertainment.

THERE ARE SLIPPERY passages. The Italian incident, arsenic flaking from the ceiling paint onto the ambassadorial breakfast tray, led to Clare's peculiar behavior and quick resignation. The unbelievable details remain unbelievable, but then I'm impatient with such ingenious overplotting. The opéra bouffe aspects of the case distract us, then and now, from any further inquiries of a political nature. There are times when, in his urbanity, Sheed interprets what some of us still reckon as scandals of the right as mere miscalculations.

> McCarthy gave the Right a bad name, in which the Luces willy-nilly received their share. But he also gave it protection in the Mafia style. This had nothing to do with specific witch-hunts. It has often been said that Joe never came up with any real Communists, but it can be seriously debated whether he needed to. The object of the game was simply to neutralize the American Left and to keep it from mounting sustained attacks on such institutions as NATO and SEATO and our overseas military investment, or on the business structure at home that complements these: all Luce's babies. And in this respect McCarthyism was a smashing success, with or without victims, with or without Joe himself.

The biographer has not been Lucified, but when he switches to this distorting lens—"with or without victims"—it does seem as though the entire political situation existed for Harry.

Another technique in *Clare Boothe Luce* is to disarm us. Wasn't it embarrassing that she chose to consort with Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Spellman—those ninnies? And naturally anyone who'd backed the China Lobby would support our involvement in Vietnam. On a more personal level a spoke is stuck in our wheels:

> The stories keep tumbling over the transom about the other Clare who acts sassy or high-handed at parties, etc., but I'm resigned to the prospect of never meeting her. She is clearly not for me.
>
> The first pure Success Woman had to be a bit of a bitch.

A queen's got to do what she's got to do. This woman is not Madame de Sevigné or Lola Montez, but Clare Boothe Brokaw Luce. This is our time. Her performance in Congress was not disastrous. The roots of her virulent anti-Communism must be understood—and Sheed is lucid and thorough in his documentation—not blindly ignored in the counterrhetoric of liberalism. But she stood to be counted and counted she must be. A Broadway flop is different in kind from an ill-timed slur at FDR.

Looking back is a strenuous task. There was the amusing spectacle of red moiré swishing around on the television screen in the 1950s and endless Spellman jokes, but I remember feeling outrage as a young liberal Catholic at Sheen's and Spellman's politics. I can still feel it. And yes, it must have been "one of the great match-ups of the century," Clare meeting Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek, but, but. . . . If there are two Clares we must understand that there are more evidently two Sheeds: Wilfrid Sheed who sees his subject fully and writes with such authority on our recent history, and Sheed, the civilized

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younger guest who will get on in all company. Sheed who is delighted to be invited to Bill Buckley's to a dinner for Clare where it's all grandly done—I believe this to be true—and the conversation sounds like high table at some Anglican college that tolerated Catholics long ago. Fine wine, good food, good taste with an upper-class touch of bad taste. Differences diffuse by candlelight. Following the Wilfrids and Clares, we are audience as the novel, the documentary, the intimate biography gives way to a Pirandellian fancy: *Right You Are If You Think You Are* or *As You Desire Me*.

Clare Boothe Luce is infuriating and charming and a valuable record in many ways. It is successful in a manner that Sheed intends and that I could never have imagined. I end up respecting Mrs. Luce's story of first-rate ambition and modest talent, while not needing to like the woman—a hard distinction to make for an old Democrat, an Irish Catholic girl who came of political age in 1952 in Fairfield County, where Clare was back in politics, stumping in a manner both genteel and grandiose to get the Republican nomination for a Senate seat.

There is a handsome picture of her in *Vanity Fair* where she is "Nominated for the Hall of Fame: 1934." The citation reads:

> Because she has written a play, *Naomi's Daughter*; because her book *Stuffed Shirts*, was an authentic and merciless satire on New York society; because she is now writing a newspaper column; because she was formerly editor of *Vanity Fair*; and because she combines a fragile blondness with a will of steel.

She seems to have survived the cult of celebrity that she helped to create in that magazine, and that's something in an age when people seem to want to take credit just for being in a room with Richard Nixon, Mick Jagger, or Andy Warhol. She is a real and accountable person, a rich old lady living in Hawaii, protected by her fame, hard at work on the shreds of a utopian dream—until she recently received a Presidential reprieve. She has assumed the post of member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

"DOES MY LIFE make any sense?" she asks. Her biographer has attempted to answer honestly, and it's not that I simply object to a sympathetic portrait, but the gesture of friendship, the bread-and-butter letter, reads awfully flat next to the brilliant double-vision that Sheed can achieve:

> . . . and when Harry proclaimed on the way out of *The Great Gatsby* (the Alan Ladd version), 'I know what was bothering Scott Fitzgerald—it was the absence of a real aristocracy in America,' I gathered he meant the shortage of people like himself and Clare, and how they were undervalued in a Harry Truman world. It never occurred to me that *they* might be the Gatsbys looking for the light across the Sound.

That's the grown-up Wilfrid Sheed making an observation that must be as satisfying as placing the last piece in a jigsaw puzzle on a summer night in Ridgefield, 1949.

MAUREEN HOWARD

Maureen Howard's new novel, *Grace Abounding*, will be published next fall by Little, Brown.

THE VILLAGE HEARS THAT GOLD IS UNSTABLE

Sky's low with rain. The children
drag on our skirts, our baskets.
Gate bolted. Through chinks we've memorized
mustard-brown stucco and a tile roof.
The men, gone down-street, have their beery talk.
The young people, impatient for each other,
made excuses one by one, left. In drizzling dusk
one of us holds a child over the curb.
Make. Make peepee. Our shawls hold rain water.
We acknowledge the value of dry pants,
love and beer, necessary troubles,
good as a roof you may have
and must keep mended. Kids paddle and float twig-boats,
squat in puddles. But they keep quiet.
It's almost too dark
to read the placards—Beware of the Dog—
Tradespeople to the Rear—that float on the rain's wash
gathering a false white. The slate of the walk
slick with water, says nothing.
The shuttered windows
and the front door behind those black dripping bushes, are silent.

A rumor reached us.

Oldest of the old names,
numinous, most substantial of houses,
is mortal.

Any moment the doctor may emerge in a small yellow cone of light.
He will wipe his chin on his sleeve,
button his ulster, turn the collar up.
He will have to walk this way.
He is the signal for the bell's great tonguing
that keeps the thick wool in our ears this long time.
Then we make noise also for all the dead and dying.
We clean what house remains.
We're learned in that.
We are the ones had for little hire.

And something always remains,
still littler and extra, to be divided
among the rainsoaked shawls, the raw wet hands, the baskets.

ANNE HALLEY

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HELL IN A VERY SMALL PLACE

El Salvador: Central America in Cold War
edited by Marvin E. Gettleman, Patrick Lacefield, Louis Menashe, David Marmelstein, and Ronald Radosh

(Grove Press, 416 pp., $7.95)

The editors of this collection of essays, interviews, and documents are convinced that the policy of the Reagan Administration toward El Salvador is in error; they fear that American intervention "on the side of an oppressive anti-popular force" might turn this unfortunate country into another Vietnam. But even those who disagree with this position and support the Administration should read the volume, for two reasons. First, the editors have made a successful effort at presenting both sides of the issue. (Indeed, there are more than two sides: in addition to a number of views favorable to the Salvadoran left, they publish not only such texts as Mrs. Kirkpatrick's famous essay from *Commentary* on totalitarian versus authoritarian states and the State Department's White Paper on El Salvador, but also various statements by the courageous former American Ambassador Robert White, fired from his job and from the Foreign Service by General Haig; White, a devastating critic of Reagan's approach, is no enthusiast for the Salvadoran opposition.) Secondly, the most ardent believer in the anti-Soviet worldview of the Administration could not fail to learn, from this impressive compilation, that the projection on El Salvador of a simplistic "global" grid makes as little sense as in Vietnam and risks having self-destructive effects comparable to those of American policy there.

Indeed, the story is all too familiar. What is most depressing is our apparent inability to learn. We went through it in China in the 1940s, in Vietnam in the 1960s, and yet, like Orwell's estimable horse in *Animal Farm*, we act as if previous disasters resulted not from flawed premises, but from a mere failure to try hard enough. In each instance, we attributed to external intervention the responsibility for a rebellion that resulted from indigenous circumstances, from a long history of social inequities and political oppression. Our ignorance of history, our blindness to our own role in it, our reluctance to connect current troubles to class structures and to the logic of economic systems, our obsession with the struggle against Moscow and its allies, have made us believe that if we could only stop the intervention of our enemies, the internal problems would be easily solved. The fact that those whom we support are not all wicked, nor those whom we oppose all blameless and simon-pure, encourages us in our misanalysis. The fact that the victory of our opponents might indeed lead to more repression and misery on the spot as well as to international consequences detrimental to us makes us believe that the combination of hard work and good intentions on our part would ensure the triumph of the best solution—a victory of pro-American reformers. And yet, there are insurmountable obstacles that we do not see—however much, in the case of El Salvador, we may be justified in respecting José Napoleón Duarte's determination to proceed with land reform, and in distrusting the brittle coalition of his enemies and the sweeping banalities and ambiguities of their program of nationalizations and "structural reforms."

First, as in Vietnam, we tend not to understand the difficulty of carrying out reforms while waging a war. Without the reforms, "our side" cannot hope to win popular support. But, apart from the fact that the distribution of land to peasants is not at all the same thing as increasing their ability to live a decent life and to produce more efficiently—a task that may well be unachievable as long as the world economy is in trouble and foreign credit is lacking—the crux of the problem lies in the hostility of a sizable part of the armed forces, and of the oligarchs, to land reform. Furthermore, military priorities—rooting out the guerrillas and destroying their bases of support in the countryside—conflict with the priority of reform.

Secondly, should we succeed in cutting off the aid which the guerrillas receive from Nicaragua and from Cuba, and in providing enough military assistance to the ruling junta to ensure its victory, such a success would be most unlikely to trigger the fundamental economic and social changes necessary to prevent new revolts. Indeed, victory would be seen by the most powerful among the winners—the military and the oligarchs—as a reason *not* to reform. It is then that a Christian Democrat such as Duarte—tolerated today because his presence makes American aid possible—would become expendable.

Thirdly, the more we assist "our side," the more we get caught in a vicious dilemma: our victory would be that of injustice and repression, and thus—as we can see by looking at Guatemala 28 years after the overthrow of Arbenz's mild left-wing government—it is doomed to remain a Pyrrhic victory. But the victory of the left, after a protracted civil war, and given the depth of our involvement, would inevitably be a defeat for the U.S., a boon to Cuban and Soviet influence, and no guarantee of democracy or moderation in El Salvador. Indeed, the longer the civil war lasts, the more the radical elements in the opposition are likely to dominate it. And yet the costs we would incur in order to make the present regime win—by antagonizing our West European allies and Mexico, by allowing the Soviets to divert public attention from their own exactions in Afghanistan and Poland, by fostering deep new divisions in this country, by turning our fear of a rabidly Marxist and anti-American Nicaragua into a self-fulfilling prophecy—would exceed by far the damage done to our vital interests by a victory of the left either in El Salvador or in Nicaragua. Fortunately, there are other alternatives than military defeat, endless war, and military victory.

FOURTH, THE ONLY sensible policy for the U.S. is not to support the Salvadoran regime's attempt at holding elections that can, at best, not be free—since much of the opposition couldn't run and would be annihilated if it tried—and, at worst, be nothing but a tragic farce. It is to try to get the moderates on both sides to negotiate, as our European allies and as the Mexicans have urged us to do. But we are once again caught in a dilemma: even if we threaten to cut off our aid in order to force the more murderous of our

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"friends" to follow us where they do not want to go, we would not be assured of success, but we would certainly provoke a reactionary backlash in those American circles—around Senator Helms, for instance—which deem any compromise treacherous and anything short of right-wing victory dangerous. But if we do not put the strongest possible pressure on the Salvadoran military, we shall remain at its mercy.

FIFTH, WE COME once more—and as usual, very late—to the same conclusion. Regimes that are not merely those "traditional," moderately repressive governments that Mrs. Kirkpatrick imagined, but which are profoundly disruptive of their own societies—as in the Shah's Iran, or in Somoza's Nicaragua, or as in El Salvador and Guatemala—deserve American support only if they are willing to reform in time. But it is unlikely that the beneficiaries of injustice and repression will see the light, and take the radical measures of economic overhaul, social redistribution, and political liberalization which would undermine their power. And it is difficult for an outside power such as the U.S. either to know what would be needed, or to dictate it—not so much, as the Marxists argue, because of the transnational solidarity of the exploiters' interests, as because of a lack of understanding, experience, will, and means. Our incorrigible quest for third forces in countries where they do not exist, or where they have been wiped out by polarization, ought to have taught us some modesty. Therefore, it is best for the U.S. to dissociate itself from such regimes as much as possible. It is true that this leaves the field open to forces that we don't like, and that seek the support of our international enemies. But the more we oppose them, the more they will turn only to Moscow and Havana; and the more their victory will be our defeat. Dissociation may not bring about the vindication of human rights. But it would save us from having to pretend, as the Administration is currently doing, that the regime we protect respects human rights when the evidence, which the whole world can see, shows that this is a lie.

To Reagan and his supporters, this is a counsel of defeat, or of "masochism." But masochism lies in the repeated courting of disaster; and the real disaster lies, not in the victory of the left in countries in which the right has provoked its own demise, but in American interventions that destroy in order to save, distress our allies, and ultimately bring aid and comfort to our enemies. It is the merit of this collection that it tells us both what is specific to the pathetic case of El Salvador, and what it has in common with other recent tragedies.

STANLEY HOFFMANN

Stanley Hoffmann is Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and chairman of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.

COMING:
John Simon
on Kafka.

MYSTERIES

One of the nicest books in some time is Peter Lovesey's *The False Inspector Dew* (Pantheon, $12.95), which has a tone of sanity, calm reason, and quiet exasperation. Lovesey has carved out a special niche, the carefully realized detective novel set in Victorian or Edwardian England, and now he has stepped forward to 1921. The real Inspector Dew won fame by solving the Crippen case. Here, among a group of socialites, a man taken to be Inspector Dew emerging from retirement steps forward to solve the mystery of a woman missing and presumed overboard on the *Mauretania*'s transatlantic crossing. We know from the outset that the false Inspector Dew is a society dentist who (it may be) is enamored of a young woman and despairing of his egotistical wife. We know a parallel mystery concerning theft in the first-class cabins and what may be a second murder is taking shape around the first mystery. We appear to know more than we do, yet we know just enough, so that in the end we realize we have been led subtly through a most carefully constructed bit of intellectual marquetry. The book is, quite simply, remarkably enjoyable.

So is Sara Paretsky's debut in *Indemnity Only* (Dial Press, $14.95). Though a foot is put wrong here and there, for the most part Ms. Paretsky—who has a Ph.D. in history and works as manager of sales promotion for an insurance company—weaves a thoroughly convincing, and gritty tale about V. I. Warshawski, a tough and attractive Chicago private detective who is a woman. Both Paretsky and Warshawski are convincing, and feminist literature (if it will admit the mystery novel to its halls) has gained a recruit who, by telling it like it is, will win more voters for ERA than all the analyses of sexist words in French texts. The puzzle is simple enough: a young man is found murdered, probably for reasons having to do with an insurance scam, and most likely in relation to the toughest union in town. One can see what is coming at once but this doesn't make the novel any less compelling.

The traditional macho private eye is still around, of course, and the second Mike Haller mystery, *Fly Away* (Bantam, $2.50), from the hand of Max Byrd, proves that the formula remains right for the compulsive page-turner. Byrd's first book, *California Thriller*, set up an interesting and plausible plot situation and then fell into a welter of violence to resolve its conflicts. Byrd is now on top of his plotting as well as his prose, and this tight, fast inquiry into why the young English-born wife of the son of a Mafia boss should have disappeared is full of convincing characters, nasty types, wayward youths, and sound Englishmen. Though Haller works in California, most of the action here takes place in England, and oddly this crude detective seems more at home in London than San Francisco. The tough American at work in staid London is always good for amusing contrasts, and Byrd works this theme entertainingly. He also has a way with words that not all will like, though I do: Bloomsbury, the Levittown of George the Third, seems to inspire Haller into new heights of hatred for California where "the oldest structures I ever see . . . are Chevrolets with running boards" and where the brain is soon turned into a hot tub.

Still, the battle to get people to try out fiction like this is likely to be lost if those people who write dust-jacket copy have lost faith too. What is one to make of a recent book (which will remain nameless) described as "a novel so vividly written with such a memorable

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hero . . . it breaks out of the suspense genre." And all along I felt guilty for believing that vivid writing and memorable (if not believable) heroes were thought to be the hallmarks of just this kind of fiction. Copy writers like this prove the Irish saying that friends are the best enemies: they know just where the shoulder blade is.

ROBIN W. WINKS

BRIEF REVIEWS

Surfaces of a Diamond by Louis D. Rubin Jr.

(Louisiana State University Press, 232 pp., $12.95)

In *Surfaces of a Diamond* Omar Kohn tells of the spring and summer in the low country of South Carolina during 1939, when, behind his own mask as a child, he recognizes the features of an uncertain adolescent, and he starts to make sense of his life. Omar's distinction arises from circumstances: a Jew in the South, with a father whose illness forces him to retirement in his mid-forties, Omar feels himself twice-removed from the Charleston society around him, and anxious for common bonds. Otherwise he's undistinguished. He bats sixth, fields badly, and manages timidly for a team in the neighborhood baseball league. Although he writes good copy for the school paper and earnestly studies the Civil War, he barely passes in regular school work. With family and girls, he's odd man out. He longs to turn the ache of adolescence into the contentment he sees in adults who know who they are.

Mixed with young Omar's story are brief, italicized notes from the same narrator, now middle-aged, explaining his views on memory, meaning, and art. He writes:

> Neither in memory, nor in the interpretation of its meaning for the present, does the truth of our experience lie. It is in the shaping of lineaments of memory into patterns that will reveal their own meaning that experience becomes real.

Later: ". . . I still hold to the notion that art is highest when it conceals art." With these and other elusive abstractions, the narrator constructs an intriguing frame around young Omar's story. Does Omar tell us what happens in his life, or only what he remembers as truth? Is his simple tale innocent, or is the story made of conjured parts that can't be separated from the actual whole?

Louis Rubin, a professor of English at the University of North Carolina who has previously written a number of nonfiction books and one other novel, presents Omar's passage in an unadorned style, the kind of language a thoughtful man might use in a personal memoir or journal. The book's mix of young and seasoned voices does not succeed so well that the boy's story can stand for the man's ideas on art. Occasionally the second intrudes on the first, when stale, dry judgments turn lively adventures flat. But together they often have a meditative effect, which seems to be Rubin's goal. "It is the period between dream and awakening that I find most fascinating," he writes. At its best *Surface of a Diamond* has the compelling quality of that crepuscular state.

LINCOLN CAPLAN

Lincoln Caplan is a Washington writer.

Love Poems by Yehuda Amichai

(Harper & Row, 128 pp., $12.50)

For Yehuda Amichai, to make poetry and love is to seek an antidote to history and a substitute for religion. The ability "to live for a few months/ without needing a religion/ or a *Weltanschauung*" is the most valuable of love gifts. The temporal limitation here is a mark of moderation, as is the recognition, in another poem, that "Whatever I scream and speak and whisper is/ to comfort myself." In contrast there are moments of extravagant hyperbole, as in this early "Song for Tamar":

> Each day of our life together
> Koheleth erases a line from his book.
>
> We are the saving proof in the terrible trial.
> We'll acquit them all.

I admit that this hopeless metaphysical bravado (it makes me think of Donne) is what pleases me most in Amichai's poetry. But I can also appreciate the upside-down wisdom of love when it is not stood on its head. In one of the finest poems in this collection Amichai is looking (in The Prophets' Street, "where there aren't any") for an apartment for a woman who is moving. When he finds one, he'll carry her bed there

> like a cross,
> though it's hard to suppose
> a woman's bed the icon of a new religion.

In these poems, what is called "love" is an experience valued for being nontranscendental, nonpublic, and in a sense even nonmemorable—a liberation from the need to promise in a life where nothing endures anyhow. The poems provide many wistful verbal strategies for dealing with change, preparing for loss, explaining withdrawal. As such they read like a series of exercises in mutability, and when the athlete is well conditioned, a certain glibness can set in. With improved travel opportunities, lovers come and go, trailing behind them ever more diverse cultural exotica. Here the elegy of separation, for me, deteriorates into sentimentality. It is the telescoping of vast geographical, historical, and intellectual distances into the brief, private space of a lover's bed and a few lines (even a single pun) that is Amichai's most vital rhetorical device, both in his best and in his less successful efforts.

The attractions of Amichai's poetry are obvious, but in Israel, of late, his reputation has suffered somewhat. He is still "commonly regarded as Israel's leading poet" (as the jacket informs us)—indisputably so if sales figures are to be taken into account (Natan Yonatan may exceed him there, but has not been deemed worthy of the higher criticism). If, however, the interests of younger poets are consulted, then surely it is the terser diction of Natan Zach, and the more austere poetic self Zach forged in his earlier work as well as his recent openness to public affairs, which currently seem to offer the most challenging poetic influence.

In English Amichai probably is, and remains, the most widely read Hebrew poet since the Bible was translated into English. There is even a received opinion, held by friends and foes alike, that

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he reads as well or better in translation. A bilingual edition affording half its space to a language as esoteric as Hebrew is both a mark of the attention a poet is in a position to command and an act of high courage. It certainly makes for a pretty page of print, but to the inquisitive, alas, proves on too many occasions a bit foolhardy. I shall not bore you with the enumeration of the few errors and numerous awkwardnesses I have been able to detect. Most of the translations are at best serviceable, and I take it for granted that translation, especially of poetry, is quite impossible. If you are not too pedantically bilingual, you can enjoy them; and if you are, you can always try to improve.

MOSHE RON

Moshe Ron teaches literature at Hebrew University.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 8*

who depend on the current system at least as much as, if not more, than their clients, the defined poor. The claims of this group that their clients are all "truly poor" and that the services they provide are essential, will never, for political reasons, be scrutinized in Washington. They may be more critically examined at the state and local levels. If so, and if the "New Federalism" does not have too many strings attached, ways may be found to protect the "truly" poor as distinguished from the "career" poor.

Ironically, individuals with immediate (often relatively short-term) financial needs are ill-served by the present system. As a Legal Aid attorney, I frequently referred such individuals to churches or other private agencies to tide them over until they met bureaucratic eligibility requirements. Nationalization of the present welfare system will exacerbate its twin evils—creation and maintenance of a welfare class and failure to meet immediate needs.

Mary Ash
Stanford, California

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number; should be typed double-spaced; and should be held to under 200 wrods.

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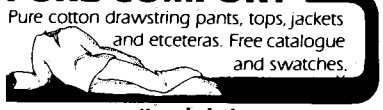

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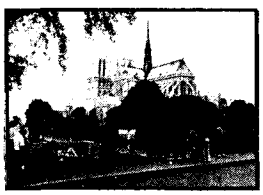

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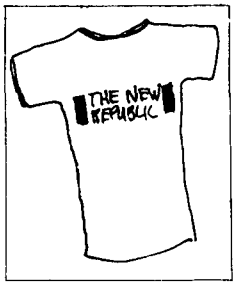

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Busting Out

CALL ME A PHILISTINE, but in the past year or so I have walked out in the middle of three Major Cultural Events: the new American opera, *Willie Stark*; Louis Malle's movie, *My Dinner With André*; and, most recently, the resurrection of Abel Gance's 1927 film, *Napoleon*. It wasn't that I necessarily had better things to do; it was just that I found each of these productions, aggressive in its tedium, an assault on the audience. About an hour into each, I would turn to my wife and whisper: "Emperor's New Clothes Department?" She would nod yes. A little while later, we would make our break. Now, I am not the type who makes a big show of walking out. In the case of *Willie Stark* and *Napoleon*, I merely snuck out at intermission, grinning in conspiracy at the handful of other patrons who were also making a getaway, happy fugitives gliding down the Kennedy Center escalators. *My Dinner With André* was more difficult. It was shown at one of those tiny theaters that used to be part of a much bigger theater. The emergency exit there really *is* an emergency exit—touch the door handle and you set off an alarm. Couldn't do that: it might wake someone up. So I scuttled along in front of the screen, then up the center aisle.

THERE IS CLEARLY some relationship between the popularity of marathon cultural events (I'd also include the all-day *Nicholas Nickleby* and the 12-hour "Brideshead Revisited") and the popularity of marathon running events. Maybe it's the point that Charles Krauthammer recently made in these pages: this is the era of survivor chic, when there is no higher human achievement than making it through life. Or through a four-hour movie in which a repulsive Rod Stewart look-alike plays a French emperor. Walking out on a movie or a play is not proper Washington etiquette. It disturbs order. This is a city in which cars don't run yellow lights and pedestrians don't jaywalk. Even the pursuit of pleasure is structured in Washington—entertainments, love affairs, Chinese dinners all have a beginning, a middle, and an end. And, despite the fact that the law of diminishing returns applies with a vengeance (especially in the case of four-hour movies), you're not supposed to walk out in the middle.

THE PHRASE "Diminishing Returns" reminds me of the real estate market in Washington, which is on the rocks. A house down the street in my own bucolic suburb of Bethesda has been for sale for more than a year, and they just cut the price. For the third time. It's worse, I'm told, in what are called "transitional neighborhoods." Houses languish unsold for months on Capitol Hill; the seller ends up taking back a mortgage six points under the market rate, hoping that the buyer can find long-term financing in a year or two. I'll admit that this misery gives me a certain perverse pleasure. In May of 1980, I wrote an article for TNR entitled "Prisoners of Real Estate," in which I cast doubt on the idea of a perpetual real estate boom and said unkind things about friends whose high mortgage payments forced them to subsist on chicken salad sandwiches as they waited to trade up for an even bigger score. In the early days of 1980, these prisoners could still have busted out (gliding down their own figurative escalators). They could have sold, taken their profits, and run. Now they're truly prisoners, sentenced by Reagan and Volcker and their own greed, to a long incarceration at the same address.

BUT SOME FOLKS continue to buy houses—especially expensive houses. The *Washingtonian* magazine, which carefully chronicles such goings-on, recently listed 148 transactions in 1981 in which houses in the area were sold for $350,000 or more. Among the purchasers were such toilers in the vineyards of the media as James Fallows of the *Atlantic Monthly*, who bought a house on Dexter Street in Northwest Washington for $420,000; Sander Vanocur of ABC television, who bought a Georgetown house for $475,000 (and must now meet payments on a $299,000 mortgage); and Oswald L. Johnston, a correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, who sold his Georgetown house to Jean Mayer, the nutritionist, and traded up to a $489,000 manse on Quebec Street. But these fellows are pikers next to certain members of the Reagan Administration. Caspar Weinberger paid $707,000 for a house in the ritzy Kalorama section, James Baker paid $715,000 for a home on Foxhall Road, and Labor Secretary Ray Donovan bought a place in McLean, Virginia (which is where Teddy Kennedy and Chuck Robb live), for $756,265.

THE GREATEST FEAR in Washington today is not unemployment or nuclear war—it's that Congress will listen to reason and vote a limit on the amount you can deduct from your income taxes for interest payments. I know dozens of people who have $1,500- or $2,000-mortgage payments each month, allowing them to deduct $20,000 or so from their $50,000 incomes each year. A $10,000 cap on deductions could touch off a middle-class riot, worse than the lower-class one in 1968. Hudson Brothers, the greengrocers in Georgetown, would be sacked, and the Surrey, the equestrian outfitters in Potomac, would be burned to the ground. Too chilling even to think about.

IN THIS CITY of inconspicuous Toyotas, Hondas, Rabbits, and the occasional unostentatious BMW and Mercedes, I write a monthly column for the aforementioned *Washingtonian* magazine. In Washington, as opposed to, say, Houston or Los Angeles, the automobile is believed to be an evil—a necessary evil, but not a good, and certainly not a pleasure. This is perhaps why no one is very concerned here about the decline of the American auto industry—or cognizant of what I think is the first sign of its resurgence: the return of the muscle car, specifically the new Mustang GT, with a 302-cubic-inch V-8 that gives it speeds of up to 132 miles per hour, and the gorgeous new Pontiac Trans-Am and Camaro Z-28, which are probably the best-looking American cars since the 1955 Lincoln Continental. Detroit has become too self-conscious in recent years. It now appears to be getting back to doing what it does best—building comfortable, powerful cars with great naive American style. The Japanese and Germans simply don't understand the appeal of a DeSoto or a '59 Ford Galaxie. Let the foreigners turn out those poky little boxes. American companies should get back to making cars with the nerve to show off. But, then, philistine that I am, what do I know about such aesthetic matters?

J. K. G.

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14 Furchte dich nicht. Komm, Jesu. Lobet dem Herrn. Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren. Ich laße dich nicht.

15 Sacred songs.

16 *Christmas* Oratorio. For the 1st Day of Christmas. For the 2d Day of Christmas.

17 Christmas Oratorio. For the 3rd Day of Christmas. For New Year's Day.

18 Christmas Oratorio. For the 1st Sunday in the New Year. For the Feast of Epiphany.

19 Magnificat. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland.

20 Christum wir sollen loben schön. Sehet, welch eine Liebe.

21 Cantata for New Years Day. Cantata for the Feast of Epiphany.

22 Cantata for the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany. Cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation.

23 Cantata for Palm Sunday. Cantata for the 1st Day of Easter.

24 Cantatas for the 2nd and 3rd Days of Easter. Cantata for the 1st Sunday after Easter.

25 Cantatas for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays after Easter.

26 Oratorio for Ascension Day. Cantata for the 6th Sunday after Easter.

27 Cantatas for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Days of Whitsun.

28 Cantatas for the Feast of Trinity and 1st Sunday after Trinity.

29 Cantata for the 2nd Sunday after Trinity.

30 Cantata for the 3rd Sunday after Trinity.

31 Cantatas for the 5th and the 15th Sundays after Trinity.

32 Actus tragicus. Cantata for the 19th Sunday after Trinity.

33 Cantatas for the 22nd Sunday after Trinity, Feast of the Visitation, 24th Sunday after Trinity.

34 Coffee Cantata. Peasant Cantata.

35 The contest between Phœbus and Pan.

36 The pacification of Aeolus.

37 Music to celebrate the birthday and nameday of King Augustus III.

38 Overture No. 1 in C major. Overture No. 4 in D major.

39 Overture No. 2 in B minor. Overture No. 3 in D major.

40 Brandenburg Concerti Nos. 6 (Bb major), 3 (G major), 1 (F major).

41 Brandenburg Concerti Nos. 2 (F major), 4 (G major), 5 (D major).

42 Concerti (2) for Harpsichord and Orch. in D minor and E major.

43 Concerti (3) for Harpsichord and Orch. in D major, A major and F minor.

44 Concerti (3) for Harpsichord & Orch. in F maj. & C min., for 2 Hpsi. & Orch. in C min. (BWV 1060).

45 Concerti (2) for 2 Harpsichords and Orch. in C major & C minor (BWV 1062).

46 Concerti (3) for 3 Hpsi. & Orch. in D min. & C maj., for 4 Hpsi. & Orch. in A minor.

47 Concerti (3) for 2 vlns., str. & continuo in D maj., for vln., str. & continuo in A minor & E major.

48 Concerti (3). Triple in A min., for oboe d'amore & str. in A maj., for vln., oboe, str. & cont. in D min.

49 Sonatas. No. 1 in B minor, No. 2 in A major, No. 3 in E major.

50 Sonatas. No. 4 in C minor, No. 5 in F minor, No. 6 in G major.

51 Sonata No. 1 in G minor. Partita No. 1 in B minor.

52 Sonata No. 2 in A minor. Partita No. 2 in D minor.

53 Sonata No. 3 in C major. Partita No. 3 in E major.

54 Suite in G minor. Suite in E minor. Prelude, Fugue & Allegro in Eb major.

55 Suite in C minor. Prelude in C minor. Fugue in C minor. Suite in E major.

56 Sonata in B minor. Sonata in Eb major. Sonata in A major. Sonata in G minor.

57 Sonata in C major. Sonata in E minor. Sonata in E major. Partita in A minor for Solo Flute.

58 Trio Sonata for 2 *Flutes & Continuo*. Sonatas No. 3 (G min.), No. 1 (G maj.), No. 2 (D maj.).

59 Suite No. 1 in G minor. Suite No. 2 in D minor.

60 Suite No. 3 in C major. Suite No. 4 in Eb major.

61 Suite No. 5 in C minor. Suite No. 6 in D major.

62 Musical Offering.

63 Organ Works.

64 Organ Works.

65 Organ Works.

66 Organ Works.

67 Organ Works.

68 Organ Works.

69 Organ Works.

70 Organ Works.

71 Organ Works.

72 Organ Works.

73 Organ Works.

74 Organ Works.

75 Organ Works.

76 Organ Works.

77 Organ Works.

78 Organ Works

79 Suite in A minor. Suite in Eb major. 12 Little Preludes. 6 Little Preludes. 3 Minuets.

80 Inventions. Sinfonias.

81 The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I.

82 The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I.

83 The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part II.

84 The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part II

85 The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part II.

86 Toccata in G min. Toccata in D maj. Toccata in F# min. Toccata in C min.

87 Toccata in D min. Toccata in E min. Toccata in G maj. Fantasia & Fugue in A minor.

88 Part III of the Clavier-Übung.

89 Part IV of the Clavier-Übung.

90 French Suites.

91 French Suites.

92 English Suites.

93 English Suites.

94 English Suites.

95 First Part of the Clavier-Übung.

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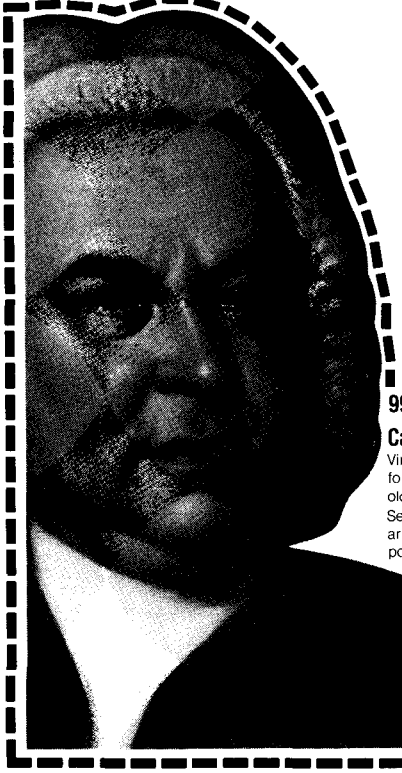

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